

DEAD CHURCHES TELL BAD TALES

REVELATION 3:1-6

CHRIST'S MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH OF SARDIS



Revelation 3:1-2



- ▶ “And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: ‘The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. “‘I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. ²Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God.

Revelation 3:3-4



- ▶ 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. ⁴ Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy.

Revelation 3:5-6



- ▶ ⁵ The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. ⁶ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

The Dead Church is comprised of Dead People



- ▶ **“Corpses man the ship; dead men pull the oars; dead men hoist the sails; dead men steer the vessel.”** (Coleridge, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*)



Sardis

- ▶ Capital of Lydia 1200 B.C.
- ▶ Fell to Persians 549 B.C.
- ▶ Earthquake 17A.D.
- ▶ Tiberius waived taxes
- ▶ Mountainous – thought to be tactically impenetrable



I. Christ Is The Head And The Heart Of The Church (1a)

- ▶ 1a “And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: ‘The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.



II. Christlessness Is The Death And The Dearth Of The Church (1b)

- ▶ 1b ““I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead.

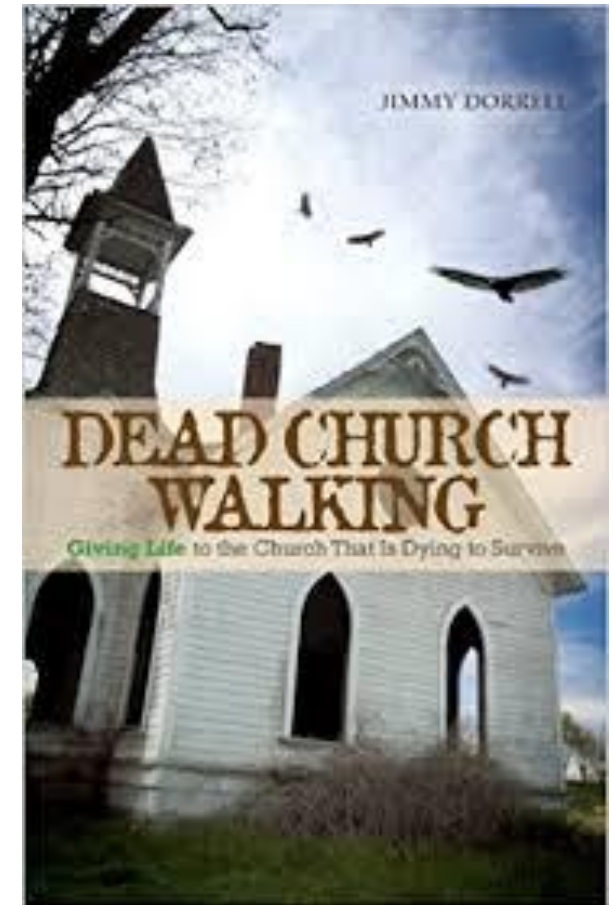
A. Reputation: Activity Gives The Appearance Of Life

1. A Dying Church Focuses On External Good Deeds, Not Internal Spiritual Transformation
2. A Dying Church Is Alive To The World, But Dead Towards The Lord



Signs of A Dying Church

- ▶ The Word of God is not the authority
- ▶ Christ is a mere historical figure or example and not Lord
- ▶ God is not worshipped, but a church's own history, reputation or name is worshipped



**III. Christ's Glory
And Gospel
Is The Pulse
Of The
Church (2-4)**



A. Revival – Resuscitation Of A Dying Church (2)

▶ **Wake Up** – “*wake up*”

▶ 1 Pet 2:4-5

▶ 2 Cor 6:16

▶ Gal 2:19-20)

Each Member Is An Active Priest(ess)

- ▶ **1 Peter 2:4-5** ⁴ As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, ⁵ you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

God Actively Lives In And Among Us

- ▶ **2 Corinthians 6:16** What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, “I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

To Live For God Is To Be Crucified With Christ

- ▶ **Galatians 2:19-20** ¹⁹ For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. ²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives-in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

A. Revival – Resuscitation Of A Dying Church (2)

- ▶ Wake Up
- ▶ **Strengthen What Remains –**
*“and strengthen what remains
and is about to die”*
- ▶ Evaluate The Focus Of The Church’s Ministry



A. Revival – Resuscitation Of A Dying Church (2)

- ▶ Wake Up
- ▶ Strengthen What Remains
- ▶ **Evaluate The Focus Of The Church's Ministry** – *“for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God.”*



**B. Repentance –
Turn Around
Or Die (3-4)**



**KEEP
CALM
AND
REPENT
OR DIE**

Remember To Obey God's Word Or Be Judged

- ▶ 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.



Build Around The Few Who Remain Righteous In Christ

- ▶ *⁴ Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy.*

IV. Heaven's Reward Is Our Pursuit, Not Earthly Acceptance (5-6)



will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.



- ▶ A Clothing Of Righteousness Is The Celebratory Reward (5a)
- ▶ A Permanent Entry Is The Ultimate Assurance (5b)
- ▶ An Honorable Mention Is The Highest Honor (6)

Conclusion



- ▶ A spiritually dying church/fellowship/individual emphasizes external good works, not spiritual growth.
- ▶ A spiritually dying church/fellowship/individual becomes content with the way things are and doesn't seek to grow in new areas or reach out to others.
- ▶ A relationship with and dependence upon The Holy Spirit is essential to spiritual vibrancy.

AUTOPSY ON A DEAD CHURCH MEMBER

Skull Bone - Too Big.

Nose Bone - Extreme Wear.

Chest Bones - signs of t.b.

Finger bones - Extreme Wear.

Hip Bone - Out of Joint.

Rotten Bones.

Feet Bones - Very Ugly.



Jaw Bone - Extreme Wear.

Neck Bone - Stiff.

Arm Bone - Broken.

Back Bone - Missing.

Tail Bone - Extreme Wear.

Knee Joints - Stiff.