

I. THE CONDITION OF THE CHURCH

A. Some facts about the church in Sardis

1. Sardis was located about 50 miles east of Smyrna
2. City of wealth, culture, and great idolatry
3. Church was like the city – had a NAME
 - a. The city had a reputation, so did the church
 - b. But was DEAD – MATT. 23:27 – “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.”

B. The Perfect and COMPLETE Christ speaks through the pastor – REV. 3:1

1. The Seven Spirits speak of the Seven Characteristics of Christ
2. ISA. 11:1 – “And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: (2) And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;”
3. Spirit of the LORD, wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge
4. Spirit of the fear of the LORD.

C. No commendation for this church at all (a few had held fast to the faith)

1. This church was alive in NAME only – it was a spiritual graveyard
 - a. 2 TIM. 3:5 – “Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.”
 - b. A church filled with carnality, perhaps “heady and high-minded”
 - c. Reminded of Judges chapter 1 – sets up the entire chapter
 - d. JUDGES 1:21 – “And the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem unto this day.”
2. Still called a “church” by Jesus Christ, but on its last breath
3. How do they fix it? How would WE fix it?

II. THE CAUTION TO THE CHURCH

A. STIR UP the truth that remains – REV. 3:3

1. Remember!
 - a. Go back to the fount where the glory ran out!
 - b. Remember the five loaves and five thousand – MATT. 16:9
 - c. Remember Lot's wife – LUKE 17:32
 - d. Remember the word that I said unto you – JOHN 15:20

- e. MARK 8:18 – “Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?”
- 2. Ever talk with a young child and they ask, “remember when...”?
 - a. Only happened a few months ago...but they think it’s distant past!
 - b. Why do they do that? They’re cementing in memory.
 - c. They’re learning what and how to think about things!
- 3. DO the same thing! Remember how GOOD God has been to you!
 - a. Do you remember the day you were Saved?
 - b. The PEACE that passeth all understanding?
 - c. The KNOWLEDGE that your sins were all forgiven?
 - d. 2 PETER 3:1 – “This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance:”
- B. STRENGTHEN the TRUTH that remains – REV. 3:3
 - 1. They had let slip much of what they had received in compromise
 - 2. 2 COR. 6:16 – “And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”
 - a. We just studied this in Malachi – Wednesday night
 - b. What agreement hath righteousness with unrighteousness?
 - c. What agreement hath light with darkness?
 - 3. Be PRINCIPLED! Lines that will not be crossed!
 - a. Why should a man never hit a woman?
 - b. We MUST talk about truth! We must teach the next generation
 - c. We may not know EVERYTHING but STAND on what you do!
- C. STAND on the TRUTH that remains!
 - 1. Ever play King of the Hill?
 - 2. GAL. 5:1 – “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”
 - 3. Key Verse of the HOPE Addictions Recovery ministry
 - a. We make much of holding the other team in sports (example)
 - b. We decorate soldiers who hold fast against enemy (Valley Forge)
 - c. Why shouldn’t Christians hold fast against OUR enemy?
 - d. Why shouldn’t CHURCHES hold fast against compromise?
 - e. How much more important in eternity?
 - f. EPH. 4:14 – “That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;”
 - 4. Plant your feet upon the Word! Don’t get pushed around!

III. The Choice to the Church

A. Remember – Hold Fast – Repent – Watch

- 1. This church in Sardis may RETURN to the Truth of God’s Word

2. And carry out the Great Commission (they weren't)
3. Why would anyone want what they had?
 - a. You can be just like the world AND pay tithes?
 - b. What kind of sales pitch is that? Sugar-free candy.
 - c. From the LOST view: Why not just do everything you want?
- B. Or suffer the consequences
 1. Interesting word: Consequences
 - a. Same word as "sequential" or the next logical thing in order
 - b. Flip the switch and the light comes on...
 - c. Eat nothing but candy... no nutrition, no protein
 2. They would continue to grow weaker and die
 3. The LORD would remove their candlestick
 - a. Don't read that incorrectly – that wasn't "punishment"
 - b. That's just what happens when a church dies.
 - c. Death from malnutrition!

IV. THE CONSOLATION TO THE CHURCH

- A. There were still a FAITHFUL few in the church! – REV. 3:4
 1. A few who had a little strength left
 2. Not just eating donuts at the office, but eggs and bacon at home!
 3. I've been in quite a few churches over the years
 4. So sad to see those few steadfast saints trying to hold things together
- B. There were still an UNDEFILED few in the church!
 1. That word means their garments were not spotted with the world
 2. Work in concrete... and your garments become spotted with concrete
 3. Work as a painter and your garments become spotted with paint
 4. YOU get splashed by what you're standing in!
 5. JAMES 1:27 – "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."
- C. These will walk with Him in white – REV. 3:4
 1. Their works shall stand the test of fire – not wood, hay, and stubble
 2. They shall have gold, silver, precious stones for the KING
 3. But the rest can too! We must only change our GARMENTS!
 4. Put on the new man – Walk ye in HIM

V. The Call to the Church

- A. It is a promise not a warning – REV. 3:5
 1. 1 JOHN 5:4 – "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."
 - a. To be clothed in white raiment (garments of salvation) ISA. 61:10
 - b. To be eternally secure – HATH everlasting life – JOHN 5:24

- c. To be represented by our heavenly advocate and intercessor
 - d. 1 JOHN 2:1 – “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:”
- B. It is a call to HEAR – a call to OUR church
- C. It is also a call to Salvation
1. You cannot have this promise from the King
 2. Without being part of His Kingdom!
 3. Be Saved today!