



"DEAR CHURCH", PART 6 SARDIS—REPUTATION VERSUS REALITY

August 18th, 2019
Keith Jenkins

BIBLICAL TEXT(S)

*"More than wealth,
I wanted to pass
along a good reputa-
tion, a good name,
to my children.
I learned that from
my grandfather.
And the Lord has
been faithful
through the
generations of
our family."*

—Pastor Keith

MAIN TEXT:

"To the angel of the church in Sardis write:

These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have found your deeds unfinished in the sight of my God. Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; hold it fast, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.

Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. The one who is victorious will, like them, be dressed in white. 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. Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches." (Revelation 3:1-6)

ADDITIONAL TEXTS:

But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7)

"And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. (Matthew 6:5-6)

You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you, for he wrote, 'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. (Matthew 15:7-8)

Hebrews 2:1 ...we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.

Psalms 139:23-24 Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. 24 Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.

Phil 2:12 "...continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling"

Hebrews 10:24 Let us think of ways to motivate (inspire, encourage) one another to acts of love and good works.

MESSAGE SUMMARY

The church in Sardis might have looked good on the outside, but they had some deep seated problems on the inside. Jesus addresses this church in Revelation chapter 3. He says that while they have a good reputation and look like they're doing all the right things, on the inside they are dead. He calls them to wake up, to repent and remember what God has done for them.

We can easily find ourselves in this same position. We may look good on the outside, doing all the right things, but on the inside we're rotting. It's not serving and action that brings us closer to God, it's continually turning to Him and remembering what he has done for us. If we do this, we, like Sardis, can stand before God blameless and pure, victorious because of what God has done for us.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you lead your group through a progression of engagement with the Bible passage and the speaker's message, helping

LEAN IN

These are icebreaker/warm up questions, mostly just to get the group talking and start the flow of conversation. Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.

1. Have you ever been woken from sleep and had to deal with something urgent or important? What happened?
2. Have you ever misjudged a book (or a person) by its cover? What were your assumptions and what surprised you (for good or bad)?
3. What example or story stood out to you in Sunday's sermon? Why was it significant to you?
4. What has God been teaching you through this Revelation series thus far? What is one thing you have learned that applies to your life right now?

LOOK DOWN

These are questions on the passage and observations about what's been read.

Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max

1. How does Jesus describe himself to the church at Sardis?
2. What does Jesus point out that needs to be fixed there?
3. What does Jesus tell the church they need to do?
4. What does Jesus commend the church for?
5. What promise does Jesus make in this letter to Sardis?

LOOK OUT

These questions help connect the world of the Bible to today.

Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max

1. Do you know anyone (either personally or know of them, could also include a business or other organization) that is known for one thing, but acts contrary to their reputation? What is the disconnect between what they're known for and their life?
2. Where have you seen a disconnect between what someone or something looked like on the outside and what they were actually like? What did you learn from this experience?
3. Have you seen someone (or an organization) that has realized they had a problem and were able to turn things around? What happened?
4. Why is it important for us to remember what has happened to us in the past? How can remembering help our future? How have you seen people remember their past without moving past it?
5. What do you think Jesus means when he says there are some in Sardis who "have not soiled their clothes"? How can people keep from having "soiled clothes" in our world today?

LOOK IN

These are questions that help you consider personal application.

Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max

1. Have you ever been a part of a church like Sardis that was well known and respected but not what it appeared from the outside?
2. Have you ever felt like the church in Sardis, you looked good on the outside but were dead inside? What happened?
3. Have you ever had an experience where you have "woken up" in your life to something you were oblivious before?
4. What part does remembering play in your life? How do you remind yourself of what God has done for you?
5. Is there anything you need to do to walk with Jesus or to cleanse your clothes? What is it?

**DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS,
CONT.**

LIVE IT OUT

These action steps help apply this week's message to day to day life.

Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.

1. Do you feel like you have it all together on the outside but are dead inside? How can your group pray for you as you seek to rectify this?
2. Has God "woken you up" about something in your life this week? What can you do this week to keep from falling back to sleep and/or working to repair this aspect of your life?
3. Is there something in your life that keeps you from feeling you are clean in the eyes of Jesus? How can your group pray for you as you seek to become more like Jesus and see yourself through his eyes?

NOTE: On the following page (for most weeks) you will find a set of sermon notes created by Charissa Burns, an artist who calls B4 home. We include them purely for your enjoyment and encouragement, courtesy of Charissa. You can follow her on the 'Gram @charissaburnsstudio

