

SERMON NOTES

The 7 Churches of Revelation – 5 Sardis

Around 95 AD - seven letters were written to Ephesus (lost 1st love), Smyrna (persecuted), Pergamos (compromising), Thyatira (corrupt), Sardis (dying & on life support), Philadelphia (faithful with an open door), and Laodicea (Luke warm).

Introduction - This Church seemed alive but were actually dead and dying. They were in mortal danger. Could this be true of us?

Revelation 3:1-6 - 1 "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, 'These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars:

How does Jesus introduce Himself? The 7 Spirits and 7 stars.

1. WHAT ARE THE SEVEN SPIRITS? *see below

"I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.

2 "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God.

They weren't fully dead yet - their names were in book of life.

2. WHAT CAUSES HAVING A "NAME" OF BEING ALIVE WITHOUT GENUINE LIFE? *see below

3 "Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.

4 "You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.

5 "He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments,

Defiled garments - We are given white garments by God, but we can dirty them. He sees us as clean, but our own hearts are hardened, until we can turn away from Him.

and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

3. HOW CAN OUR NAMES BE "BLOTTED OUT"? *see below

6 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." '

4. WHAT DO I NOW DO? - Examine myself - *see below

5. THE SOLUTION = REMEMBER, HOLD FAST, REPENT

Questions raised:

1. WHAT ARE THE "SEVEN SPIRITS OF GOD"? & why is it relevant?

This idea mentioned here and several places in Revelation...

Revelation 1:4 (NKJV): John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,

Revelation 4:5 (NKJV): And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

Revelation 5:6 (NKJV): And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

And then explained in Isaiah 11:2:-

Isaiah 11:1-2 (NKJV)- 1 There shall come forth a Rod from the stem (stump) of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.

2 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**.

The seven stars are the leaders / angels of the Churches.

This is relevant because we need the Spirit to be truly Spiritually alive.

Matthew 25:8-9 (NKJV)- 8 "And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.'

9 "But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.'

2. WHAT CAUSES A "NAME" OF BEING ALIVE WITHOUT GENUINE LIFE? *

- Insincerity - acting religious
- A wrong idea of salvation - that it depends on being generally a good person OR that it depends on being "Christened"
- Cultural Religion / religiousness

Real Works show life - see below re: "Examine Yourselves"

3. HOW CAN OUR NAMES BE "BLOTTED OUT"?

It is extremely difficult to lose one's salvation:

John 10:28-29 (NKJV): ""And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand."

But it can happen:

2 Timothy 2:11-13 (NKJV) "This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him.

12 If we endure, We shall also reign with Him.

If we deny (DIVORCE) Him, He also will deny us.

13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself."

The "sign" that I have rejected Him is that I can no longer repent:

Hebrews 6:4-6 (NKJV) "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame."

How does one get to this stage?

We have already said that one does not do this by "mistake", and that it is extremely hard to do, and that God is working very strongly to keep us with Him. But the way this happens is as follows:

- When I sin - I give Satan a foothold in my life which he uses to further hurt and deceive me. (Eph 4:27)
- When I choose not to obey God's voice and promptings, I harden my heart and conscience so that I am less sensitive to Him and His voice. (Heb 4:7)
- When I sin, I can be overcome by guilt and start to hide from God. (Gen 3:10)
- When I sin and refuse to glorify or obey God, my mind is darkened and I cannot think properly anymore. (Rom 1:21, 28)
- If I persist in this apathy and self-deception, allowing Satan to influence me and resisting God's voice and His people, I can eventually "stop believing" His gospel and I could reach the "divorce" point, after which I am no longer able to (or willing to) repent.

How long this takes, or what sins are involved, cannot be quantified. All we know is: I should stay "on fire for God" and close to Him, and
If I can still repent, I have not reached this point.

4. WHAT DO I NOW DO? - EXAMINE YOURSELVES

2 Corinthians 13:5 (NKJV): Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified. (fail the test).

Internal Tests -

1. Do you love Jesus? John 8:42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me..."
2. Is He your Lord? Matt 7:21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.
3. Do you trust Him and His finished work alone for your righteousness and salvation?
Galatians 2:16, 21:- 16 "knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. ...
21 "I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain."

External Tests -

4. Do you talk to Him, worship Him, listen to His voice, read His word, fellowship with His people?
John 10:27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."
1 John 5:1 (ESV) - 1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him.
 5. Do you Love people? Is there anyone you hate? –
1 John 3:14-15 (NKJV) - 14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death.
15 Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.
 6. Righteous living (increasing and absolute) -
1 Jn 3:6 (NIV) - 6 No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.
1 Cor 6:9-10 (NIV) - 9 Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men
10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.
 7. The witness of the Holy Spirit - "Abba" - Rom 8:15-16 - 15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,
5. THE SOLUTION = REMEMBER, HOLD FAST, REPENT *
- Remember HOW you received
 - Hold fast what you have.
 - Repent - breaking of the heart.
- Hosea 10:12(NKJV) Sow for yourselves righteousness; Reap in mercy; Break up your fallow ground, For it is time to seek the LORD, Till He comes and rains righteousness on you.
2 Corinthians 7:10-11 (NKJV) - 10 For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

11 For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDES

Remember that the aim of the small group is to foster discussion and community, rather than for the leader or one individual to preach to everyone.

1 - Often an **Icebreaker question** is a great way to start discussion. You could ask a question like:

- What were the highs or lows of your week?
- What is your earliest memory?
- If you had to describe yourself as one animal, what would it be and why?
- What is your favourite type of holiday destination?

2 - Next, **read the passage**. You can ask various people in the group to help by each reading a portion of the passage.

3 - These are the **main questions** to ask to understand the passage:

- What is the main message of this talk / passage?
Allow discussion and even diverging from the main topic if it is helpful.
- What did you find particularly helpful or challenging?
- What did you not fully understand?
- What can we do **PRACTICALLY** in response to this teaching?

4 - Close by offering **prayer** for each person.

- Ask, "how can we pray for you / each other now?"
- Ask each person to pray or you, as leader, pray for each person's need

The blessing and opportunity in Small Groups is the possibility for...

- Each person to contribute and/or ask questions,
- People to pray for each other and to ask for prayer,
- People to learn to use and grow in their gifts,
- Community, friendship, and intimacy in relationships.

God Bless you in this very important ministry.