

ULC Sermon Study Resource
Dear Church // Sardis: The Zombie Church
Pastor Marcus
November 12, 2023

Icebreaker:

Do you see yourself as more of a morning person or a night person?

Reading:

Revelation 3:1-6

Prayer:

Pause for a few moments to go to the Lord in prayer. Ask that He would draw near to you in this time, and open your heart and mind to hear His Word.

I. The Lure of Spiritual Slumber (Revelation 3:1-2):

- Acknowledging the struggle with waking up, Augustine recognized the allure of sleep in a spiritual context. Just as physical wakefulness requires effort, spiritual wakefulness demands self-discipline.
- In a world filled with distractions and competing priorities, how do we resist the lull of spiritual slumber and remain faithful to Christ?

II. Recognizing the Danger of Complacency (Revelation 3:1-2):

- Sardis, once a thriving city, fell into decline due to a lack of vigilance. The church in Sardis mirrored this decline, resting on past achievements without producing fruit.
- In a declining church landscape, how do we avoid becoming complacent in our faith? What does it mean to move beyond dead, lifeless orthodoxy to a vibrant, fruit-bearing faith?

III. A Letter for the Church in Decline (Revelation 3:1-2):

- Acknowledging the decline of the church in America, it's crucial to consider how we respond. Is this decline a wake-up call, urging us to move beyond cultural expectations and live as Christ's body in the world?
- How can we respond to the changing cultural landscape without compromising the essence of our faith? Is it an opportunity for renewal and a return to our calling?

IV. Remembering and Living (Revelation 3:3):

- The response to the church's error in Sardis is simple: wake up and remember. Remembering is not merely recalling historical facts but actively living in light of the mystery of God at work in history.
- How can our worship be a means of remembering and bringing into the present the redemptive work of God through Christ? How does this remembrance fuel a purposeful and impactful Christian life?

V. Living a Worthy Life (Revelation 3:4-6):

- Jesus praises those who have not soiled their garments, emphasizing the pursuit of holiness through dependence upon the grace of God.
- How do we avoid the mistake of trying to achieve holiness through our efforts alone? How can we grow in holiness by becoming more dependent on the grace that Jesus poured out on the cross?

VI. Sanctification is Learning Dependence (Revelation 3:4-6):

- Holiness is not a self-sufficient endeavor; it is grace all the way through. Growing in holiness is about deepening our dependence on the grace of God.
- In what ways do we sometimes fall into the trap of trying to earn our holiness? How can we shift our perspective to grow more dependent on God's grace throughout our sanctification journey?

Reflection/Application Questions:

- In what practical ways can we, as a church, support and encourage one another to resist spiritual complacency and embrace a vibrant, fruit-bearing faith?
- How can we ensure that our worship is more than a ritual, actively remembering and bringing into the present the redemptive work of God?
- What steps can we take to grow in holiness by deepening our dependence on the grace of God?

Suggestion for Further Study:

Ephesians 5:14 - Explore how this verse encourages believers to "wake up from their sleep" and consider its relevance to the theme of awakening from spiritual slumber in Revelation 3.

2 Corinthians 5:17 - How does this verse connect to the concept of living a worthy life and receiving a new identity in Christ?

Closing Prayer:

Lord, grant us the strength to awaken from spiritual slumber, to resist the allure of complacency, and to live lives worthy of the grace You have poured out on us. Amen.