

The Sardis Syndrome

A quick look at the church in Sardis (Revelation 3:1-6) reveals one of the most frightening situations to be found among the *“seven churches which are in Asia.”* The grave danger here lies in the condition of self-deception. Jesus stated, *“I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.”*

Sardis was one of the many outstanding Greek cities. However, during the Roman years, it had little influence due to falling into the decline of resting on its laurels. Its great pride was in its past and in the accomplishments of those who had gone before. The city itself was said to be full of the “arrogant and self-sufficient” (Summers, Worthy is the Lamb, P. 119). And, so was the condition of the church in Sardis.

To be sure, Sardis was evidently a thriving church at one time, full of life and dedication to God but they had begun to slip. The more serious danger, however, was in believing that because of past accomplishments, they could now sit back and demand the respect deserved only by the industrious. They thought themselves to be alive but, in reality, they were dead.

Someone has said, “There are few things better organized than graveyards, but there is little life there.” We must pray that we do not find ourselves in the same casket! So, we must do something about it.

We have an organized leadership, but are they active? We have elders. Do our elders pastor, lead, shepherd, and feed? We have appointed deacons. Are our deacons “deacin’?” Are they active, working, industrious in the business of the church? We have hired an evangelist. Is he proclaiming the uncompromising truth, defending the Faith, “comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable,” active in the community and reaching out to the lost? We have several programs involving gospel meetings, fellowship events, congregational Bible studies. Are the members (***all the members!***) attending our Bible studies, influencing friends and neighbors, supportive of events. We do have a Gospel Meeting in just a few weeks. Will you be there ***every*** night? Or, is the history of growth and activity in this church just a memory?

The church at Park Heights has great ability; no one would deny that if they knew anything about us. The church of Christ in Hamilton has great potential; this is obvious to even the casual observer. But, on an individual level, do we contribute to active growth or ride the bandwagon of yesterday and consider our presence on Sunday morning a sufficient sign of life?

Sardis was in danger of dying ***if*** they did not “*watch.*” We need to apply the lesson of Sardis as it will serve as an effective litmus test of our faithfulness. Ask yourself: “Am I active . . . ***NOW?***” It may keep us from fooling ourselves. “*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches*” (Revelation 3:6).