

A Dead Church

Rev. 3:1-6

Introduction:

- A. The church at Sardis (present day Turkey) must have been shocked to hear of its death.
 - 1. Had a name of being alive – now told it is dead.
 - 2. Had some of earth's finest people – now told it is dead.
- B. A church may many desirable *qualitites* and still be a dead church.

Discussion:

I. A Good Reputation (v. 1)

- A. Outward appearance of spiritual life can be deceiving (Matt. 23:25-28)
- B. Outward appearance of scripturalness can be deceiving.
 - 1. May wear scriptural name – still not be “of God” or “of Christ.”
 - 2. May formally worship scripturally – still not be from the heart (cf. Matt. 5:8).
 - 3. May teach “sound doctrine” – yet unsound in its practice (Matt. 23:1-3).

II. An Active Program (“Thy works” v. 1)

- A. Not enough to be busy, must be busy in lawful activity (cf. Matt. 7:21-23).
 - 1. Many churches are buzzing with social and recreational entertainment.
 - 2. Many churches are like lady who said, “I am too busy doing church work to save souls.”
- B. Not enough to be busy just some of the things commanded (v. 2; Matt. 23:23)
 - 1. Diligent in worship, but neglect teaching the lost.
 - 2. Careful to build and maintain physical facilities, but neglect spiritual needs.

III. A Peaceful Atmosphere

- A. It must not be at peace *in* error (cf. 1 Cor. 5:2).
- B. It must not be *with* error (2 Tim. 4:1-4)
- C. It must not be at peace from sheer indifference.
 - 1. Sin is no problem to the indifferent member – can live with it.
 - 2. Apostasy is no reason for fuss and concern to the indifferent – couldn't care less.
 - 3. Unscriptural teaching and practices no problem to him – “What difference does it make?”

IV. Some Good Members (v. 4)

- A. Good members cannot save the church as a whole (cf. Gal. 6:5-8)
- B. Good members will not answer for sins of the others.
- C. Good members can remain good in spite of dead church.
- D. Good members cannot remain good, if they participate in evil.

Conclusion:

- A. This congregation needs to feel its own pulse occasionally to see if it is still alive.
- B. This congregation needs all the above things – but it can still be dead
- C. This congregation can live only as the membership is alive individually!