

A Few Worthy Members of a Dead Church

Revelation 3:4

Introduction:

- A. Sardis was a dead church (v. 1).
 - 1. Was alive in name only (v. 1).
 - 2. Works were not perfect before God (v. 2).
 - 3. Needed to repent (v. 3).
 - 4. Threatened with judgment (v. 3).
- B. Yet, “even in Sardis,” there were a few worthy members (v. 4).
 - 1. Undefiled.
 - 2. Promised reward.
- C. This circumstance raises some important questions:
 - 1. How could there be faithful Christians in the midst of a dead church?
 - 2. How does one’s relationship to others in the church effect one’s relationship to God?

Discussion:

I. One’s Relationship to God Is Personal.

- A. Each member of a congregation is *responsible* for himself. (Matt. 25:14,15; Gal. 6:4,5).
 - 1. Work together as a body, but each responsible for his share. (Cf. Eph. 4:16)
 - 2. Sing together, but each responsible for his own (1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19).
 - 3. Commune together, but each responsible for his own. (1 Cor. 11:28, 29).
 - 4. Give together, but each responsible for his own. (1 Cor. 16:1,2; 2 Cor. 9:7).
- B. Each member of a congregation will be judged for himself. (Rom. 14:12; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:13).
 - 1. Will not be saved as a group.
 - 2. Will not be judged as a group.

II. One’s Relationship to God Does Not *Necessarily* Depend on Purity of the Rest of the Church.

- A. If one does not participate in their errors. (cf. 1 Tim. 5:22).
 - 1. In congregational activities, then all are affected (cf. Corrupt worship, work, or organization)
 - 2. In personal matters, then all may not be affected.
- B. If one does not aid (endorse, condone, defend, excuse) their errors. (2 Tim. 4:2-4; 2 John 9-11).
- C. If one does not withhold his opposition to their errors. (Acts 20:26,27,31).

III. One’s Relationship to God Does Not *Always* Demand Leaving a Generally Corrupt Church.

- A. One might remain and strengthen the church — as long as he keeps himself pure.
 - 1. Patiently correcting the opposition (2 Tim. 2:24-26).
 - 2. Patiently teaching them as long as they will endure it. (2 Tim. 4:1-5)
- B. One would need to “pull out” if:
 - 1. He cannot fulfill his personal duty in congregational activities. (Cf. Music, treasury).
 - 2. He cannot be heard in his efforts to correct errors — they will not endure sound doctrine.
 - 3. He cannot resist the pressure to conform or compromise (cf. 1 Cor. 10:12).
 - 4. He cannot avoid being a stumbling block to others. (Luke 17:1 cf ASV).
- C. One would need to go to another congregation where he could be pure - but it would not be perfect!

Conclusion:

- A. You must answer for yourself.
- B. You must be one of the undefiled — few or many.
- C. You must not allow others to defile you.