

REVELATION

A LETTER TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

Session 5: Church of Sardis - “Spiritually Dead”

Ice Breaker (optional)

Have you ever gone through a “spiritually sleepy” season? What were some signs (looking back) that you were drifting?

Sermon Summary

In Revelation 3:1–6, Jesus confronts the church in Sardis with a piercing truth: they had a reputation for being alive, but in His eyes they were spiritually dead. Unlike other churches, Sardis receives no opening commendation—only an urgent wake-up call. Their outward appearance of vitality masked an inward spiritual decline. Jesus calls them to wake up, strengthen what remains, remember the gospel they first received, and repent. This letter reveals how easy it is to substitute activity for intimacy and reputation for reality. Yet even in this severe warning, grace is evident—Jesus speaks because restoration is still possible. True revival is not emotional enthusiasm but Spirit-led repentance that produces obedience and perseverance. The overcomer is promised purity, eternal security, and the joy of being acknowledged by Christ before the Father.

Group Objective

To honestly examine our spiritual condition, respond to Jesus’ call to wake up, and pursue genuine revival marked by repentance, renewed obedience, and perseverance.

Study Questions

Read Revelation 3:1. Jesus says, “I know your works... you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead.” Why is it possible to look spiritually healthy on the outside while being spiritually empty on the inside? What dangers come with building our identity on reputation rather than reality before Christ?

Further Scripture: Galatians 1:10; 2 Timothy 3:5

2. Read Revelation 3:2. Jesus commands them to “Wake up” and “strengthen what remains.” What does spiritual sleep look like in practical terms today? How can comfort, routine, or success slowly dull our spiritual alertness?

Further Scripture: Mark 13:33–37; Romans 13:11–12

3. Read Revelation 3:3a. Jesus tells them to “remember... hold fast.” Why is remembering the gospel foundational to revival? How does intentionally recalling what you first received and believed help guard against spiritual drift?

Further Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:1–2; Hebrews 2:1

4. Read Revelation 3:3b. Jesus calls them to repent and warns of sudden accountability. Why is repentance a gift rather than merely a rebuke? What is the difference between worldly regret and biblical repentance?

Further Scripture: 2 Corinthians 7:9–10; Acts 3:19

5. Read Revelation 3:4–5. Jesus speaks of overcomers clothed in white and confessed before the Father. What does it mean to be an “overcomer” in everyday Christian life? How do these promises motivate faithfulness even when others around us grow cold?

Further Scripture: 1 John 5:4–5; Matthew 10:32

6. Read 2 Corinthians 13:5. Scripture calls us to examine ourselves. What are healthy, gospel-centered ways to evaluate your spiritual condition without falling into condemnation or fear? What is one practical step you sense God calling you to take this week?

Further Scripture: Psalm 139:23–24; James 1:22–25

Closing Prayer

Father, we come before You humbled by the words of Jesus. You see beyond our reputation, beyond appearances, and into the true condition of our hearts. Search us and reveal anything in us that has grown cold, distracted, or spiritually asleep.

Lord, awaken us. Strengthen what remains. Help us remember the gospel we first received and give us hearts quick to repent. Produce in us a real revival—not just emotion, but obedience; not just words, but perseverance.

Make us overcomers who walk closely with You, depend fully on You, and live in a way that honors Your name. We want to be alive in Christ—not just in appearance, but in truth. In Jesus’ name, amen.