

October 22, 2023

The Lord wants you to live in His liberty and freedom.

Seven Letters of Love: Part 5

To the angel of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of Him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have found your deeds unfinished in the sight of my God. Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; hold it fast, and repent, but if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you. Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. The one who is victorious will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out the name of that person from the book of life, but will acknowledge that name before my Father and His angels. Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. —Revelation 3:1–6 (NIV)

Letter 5: To the Church in Sardis

Jesus begins this letter to the church by reminding them that He knows all: “I know your deeds.” Nothing is ever out of the view of Jesus. He sees everything we do and think, and He knows who we are. There is no doubt that this church was busy doing good things, but doing and being are two different things. You have a reputation—what people see and hear about you and about the body. Many people make up their minds about Jesus by looking at His ambassadors! Do others see Jesus in us? Are we lifting Him up or ourselves? ***But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:7 NIV)***

A church is in danger of death when it begins to worship its own past, when it is more concerned with forms than with life, when it loves status quo more than it loves Jesus, and when it is more concerned with material things than spiritual things. The church may look great, may sound great, may do all the right things, but if their hearts are not right with God, then nothing is right with God. Wake up! There is hope for everyone. Live as though He could return at any moment! Why? Because He can return at any moment! Most of the time, we live as though we have all the time in the world. Just remember that time is God’s gift to you. What you do with that time is your gift back to God. Strengthen what remains. We need to build upon the firm foundation of Jesus rather than on the philosophies of men. Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard. We need to return to the Word and dependence upon God rather than upon men. Hold it fast. This phrase means to obey the word and not just hear it. James reminds us not to look in the mirror and see something that needs to be addressed and then walk away and forget about it. Repent, turn around with a submissive heart, and go in the right direction. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you. This is a reminder that those who choose to just remain religious rather than changed by a relationship with Jesus, will find themselves jarred by the reality of Him saying, “Depart from Me for I never knew you.” Yet you have a few who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with Me,

dressed in white, for they are worthy. The one who is victorious will, like them, be dressed in white. Who are these? Victorious overcomers who are so because they have trusted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. I will never blot out the name of that person from the book of life, but I will acknowledge that name before my Father and His angels. It is obvious from this passage that every name of every person is written in the Book of Life. It's God's intention that all should be saved. The only way for a person to not be saved is to deny Jesus as Savior and refuse His mercy and grace!

Dear Father, I pray that You will continually remind me that I am not my own. I've been bought with a price; therefore, I am to glorify You in this mortal body. Help me do that today—and every day that You give me. In Jesus's name, Amen.