

“Wake Up!” Revelation 3:1-6

Introduction: Pg. ____

Who in here loves a good night's sleep? We go hard. We work hard. Sometimes, we play hard, some of you play too hard. But most of really appreciate, if not, LOVE a good night's sleep.

That's why there is nothing worse than hearing. ALARM CLOCK!

I can remember going to overnight basketball camp. We're talking about 10-12 hours of basketball in the dead of summer, in gyms with no air conditioner. You better know we were so tired by the end of the day, which meant we slept really good at night, which meant when morning came, there was nothing worse than hearing.

Whistle... Whistle... Whistle.. BOOM. BOOM BOOM. BOOOOMMMMM!!!

And then if you went back to sleep, the coaches would come in your room with a wet cloth and stick in your face to make you get up. Yes, I'm looking at you Coach Fisher!

No one likes being JOLTED out of their sleep, and yet when we think about our spiritual condition, sometimes that's exactly what we need.

That's what was going on with the church at Sardis. Jesus says: WAKE UP!

Read Revelation 3:1-6

The Point: Wake up and live in the strength of God's Spirit.

I am going to give you five ways to wake up and live in the strength of God's Spirit. It all starts with...

1. Know your spiritual condition.

Jesus is Great Physician, and he provides the diagnosis.

- As we've seen, the seven stars refer to the angels of the churches.
- The seven spirits refer to the Spirit of God who is fully present with Jesus' people. In chapter 5, it says these seven spirits are like seven eyes who see all that is happening.
- When Jesus says, "I know," we need to understand that he sees our true condition! He is completely aware of what is happening in every detail of our lives, down to the level of our thoughts, desires, and loves, not just our actions.

The Condition of the Church at Sardis

- "You have the reputation for being alive, but you are dead." Whoa.
- People think you're faithful to me, but they do not see what I see.
- Jesus uses the word "Dead" as a hyperbolic descriptor to wake them up, to help them see their vulnerable position!
- That they actually have a pulse is clear from verse 2. To "strengthen what remains" tells us there were signs of life, but it has grown weaker and weaker over time! There's the Skelton of life, but it's little more than dead bones.

Did they know this? I doubt it! I'm sure THEY ASSUMED they were good...

- Human have an uncanny ability to think they best of ourselves.
 - You sound like you're getting a cold. "I'm not sick."
 - You look a little tired. "I'm not TIRED!"

- The Christians at the church of Sardis reflected the city itself. Sardis thought of itself as impenetrable to attack. Not only was it well fortified, but it sat on elevated land, with one side on such a steep cliff that they did not even place guards. Well, guess what? Twice Sardis was ransacked because they were attacked in the place they felt most secure. They assumed they were good and that was the beginning of their downfall.
- We can't assume!

Maybe you're here today and you think you're good with God because you believe he exists.
 Maybe you're today and you think you're close to God because you showed up.

APP: Our greatest need in life is to give attention to the state of our souls.

But how? How can we diagnose our spiritual condition? ASK!

- Ask God. Psalm 139:23.
- Ask your friends IN CHRIST.

T: Sleepy Christians make sleepy churches. Woke Christians make great churches!

And one more thing before we move to point 2. Why is this so egregious for Christians to sleepwalk as though they were half-dead? JESUS IS ALIVE!! My prayer... Greeting... to convos... to songs... to every sermon... Jesus is alive. He's real. Of course, I want to experience the LIFE FOUND IN HIM.

2. Do not settle for appearances.

You know how this works, right? Things look good on the outside but look a little closer. Things are not always what they seem.

- It happens at work: some people act like they are invested, but they only do enough to get by and earn paycheck.
- It happens in relationships: one person starts going through the motions and then before you know it, everything begins to crumble.
- The same thing happens in our relationship with God. Do you remember what Jesus said to the religious leaders of his day? "You people... you honor me with your lips but your hearts are far from me."

We can come here every Sunday and be little more than dead on the inside. Have you ever been there? I don't assume that is the case with you, but we need to remember: God is after our hearts!

Paul puts it like this in 2 Timothy 3: **"But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self . . . having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power." (2 Timothy 3:1-5)**

Go through motions or LIVE WITH THE POWER OF GOD infusing every step.

Who cares what people think, if there's no power! I'm talking the life of God really pouring out of our lives. That inevitable influence. People want to be more like Jesus after spending time with you.

We need to help one another in this:

- Not only should we ask our brothers and sisters how we're doing. We should more frequently go to them and get below the surface with 3 words.
 HOW ARE YOU?
 REALLY?
- It's SOOO SIMPLE.

- Ask. And then keep it real. [No one is going to throw stones when you say: I'm struggling. I'm dry. WHY? We've been there and could be there again.]
- And then what? 3 words. 3 actions. Love.
 - By Listening.
 - By Speaking. As God gives you words of truth and encouragement, whether then or later or both, offer them.
 - By Serving. (Most often through prayer)

T: Do NOT settle for appearances.

3. Receive the strength of God's Spirit daily.

Verse 2... Strengthen what remains...

Check the picture: they received Christ. They were strong, but over time, there was a decline. Perhaps it looked like this... (steady decline) More than likely, it looked like this (down and up a little, down and up a little). And one thing we need to hear this morning: usually - not always, it happens slowly and subtly.

Jesus says, strengthen yourselves again.

What does this teach us?

Following Jesus is a dynamic journey, not static.

We will be in a state of progress or regress, growth or decline. If you think life in Christ is steady state, you're steadily deceived. We see this as a maxim of life.

Illus: Kesed's Dance Class. Diet... Physical Health. Electrical Engineering - 101.

There's no coasting here. Following Jesus requires effort and devotion every single day.

**"So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day."
(2 Corinthians 4:16)**

This happens by his Holy Spirit.

- Why would Jesus introduce himself as the one with the fullness of the Holy Spirit?
- Because it's only by the presence and power of the Spirit that remain strong and strengthen the areas of our lives that have grown weaker.
- And here's some really good news: God is more than willing to give you increasing measures of his Spirit. All we need to do is ask. All we need to do is keep in step with him.
- **"If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke 11:13)**

Ask - again and again and again! Night of Prayer. Groups Nights of Prayer this Week. 24 Hours of Prayer this weekend. Asking, Seeking, Knocking. God, I don't want just the appearance of godliness. I want your power, to actually live a godly life and consistently point people to you.

[Keep fanning the flame of God's Spirit in you through the rhythms of grace he's given us: reading this book, connecting with other believers, pushing play - Praise season, getting away on retreat, worshiping weekly, serving others, journaling, meditating, and hey how about this one: simple obedience! Few steps strengthen the Spirit's work in us more than just doing what he's asked us to do.]

T: Receive the strength of God's Spirit daily (hourly, moment by moment).

4. Continue walking worthy of the gospel. (Denial/Lax/Sleepy confession)

Let's take a closer look at verses 3-4.

Jesus says "Remember, then." Remember what? "What you received and heard. Keep it and repent." Let me explain these four verbs, then help us think about the value of remembering, before thinking about a specific application to these Christians and Sardis, and consequently us. (??)

What is Jesus talking about when he tells them to Remember... - what they received and heard.

4 VERBS

- Received and Heard
 - Surely he is calling them back to the first moments of their life in Christ. They heard the good news about Jesus
 - Explain Good News
 - And they not only heard the good news, they received it. That means they wholeheartedly embraced the news of Jesus, received the gift of his salvation, were transformed from the inside out given a completely new spiritual life in Jesus.
 - That's what they are to Remember. And then he says.
- Keep it & Repent.
 - The whole of the Christian life is living consistent with the gospel.
 - Write down Colossians 2:6-7
 - Write down Titus 2:11-12.
 - How we start, is how we continue, is how we finish. Healthy Christians and healthy churches are those who just keep rejoicing in and living out the mystery of the gospel in every detail of life.
 - Relationships - we love because he love
 - Finances - we steward with kingdom priorities
 - Work - just as Jesus finished his work, we finish ours with excellence.
 - What you wanna talk about?
 - Rewind to marriage - as Christ loved the church
 - Fast forward to Easter - every good deed, which is every good thing we do - is NOT in VAIN because Jesus rose from the grave. That's what's up.
 - There's never an action we make or a word we speak or a thought we think or a desire we crave that is should ever be separated from a keeping of the gospel and living in line with it!
 - This is what repentance is. A continual turning to Christ so that we can live verse 4: to not soil our garments but walk in purity and to walk worthy of this calling we've received to follow in the steps of Jesus.

REMEMBER

- This is what we remember. Why? It's in the remembering that we are strengthened. It's in the remembering that our hope and our confidence our our motivation to keep living for Christ is found.

- Keep reminding yourself. Keep reminding one another: Jesus shed his blood for us. Jesus rose again for us. You have everything you need
- Recap Psalm 77

If not, Jesus will come like a thief...

5. Move from life to life in Christ.

The asleep to awakened reality is really a movement from life to life.

LIFE TO LIFE.

- There's no greater privilege than having your name in God's Book. Luke 10:20.
- The background here is Exodus 32:32. Israel had made a golden calf (idol) to worship. Moses pleads with God, please forgive them or blot my name out of your Book.
- God has a Book, with the names of everyone who has received the life he offers them through Jesus Christ.
- Is your name in God's Book? Does he know your name?
- Have you received the gift?
 - God you made me for yourself, to love and worship you.
 - I have not done that. My sin has separated me from you.
 - But you've made a way: For God so loved the world....
 - Turn to him. Open your hands. Receive the gift!

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU DO?

- He's not ashamed of our name.
- I belong to him. He belongs to me! He's with me.
- Acknowledge now, be acknowledged then.
- Think about this. JESUS will say your name. _____, welcome home!
- It is the moment of all moments.

Conclusion:

If this is true, how can we keep it to ourselves?? We want everyone to experience that moment of all moments!

Many scholars believe the central good work that the Sardinian Christians stepped away from was confessing Jesus before people who would look down upon them and possibly persecute them.

In the letter to Sardis, Jesus is saying: don't shrink back. Represent me before the people around you, so they can experience the LIFE you have in me!

Who's your one?

EASTER

Who's your one?

PRAY INTO THIS.... Harvest Time. Victory mentality.

"It's so hard. It will take so long." Not on the day of Pentecost.