

## Author – VS1a

Jesus introduces Himself as the One who has the 7 spirits of God and the 7 stars. The “7 stars,” defined for us in chapter 1:20, are the messengers, pastors of the 7 churches. The “7 spirits of God,” first mentioned in chapter 1:4, is best understood as referring to the Holy Spirit in His fullness.

Whereas the “**7 spirits**” (**Holy Spirit**) is depicted in chapter 1:4, as before the Throne of God, in chapter 3:1 Jesus claims personal possession of The Spirit, something He claimed while reading the Prophet Isaiah in a Synagogue in Nazareth. Luke 4:18

## Criticism – VS1b

It has been Jesus’ practice to offer some word of commendation in each letter, but in this case there is no commendation. He gets to the heart of the matter saying: *You have the reputation of being alive, **but you are dead**.*

**Question:** is it possible for a church to be hitting all of the observable markers of success but **actually be DEAD?**

**Truth Point #1:** Attendance, programs, offerings, community good works, phenomenal music, are NOT the \_\_\_\_\_ for judging a church as alive and blessed of God.

The primary indicator of a spiritually alive church is how they \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ the Great Commandment, and the Great Commission.

Is the church **Loving God** with all their heart, soul, and mind, and their neighbor as themselves... **BY** ...actively **connecting** with men, women, boys, and girls to help them become disciples of Jesus Christ, **identifying** them as His disciples through Baptism, **systematically teaching** them God’s Word so they can join Jesus in His mission and do the same with others?

A **DEAD** church can attract big crowds, have exciting programs, and raise big dollars. But the definition of being a spiritually ALIVE is directly tied to their posture with the Great Commandment and Commission.

The Church in Sardis had been weighed in the balance and determined, by the **Head of The Church**, to be DEAD, even though they had the trappings of being ALIVE.

**Prescription – VS2-3a**

**#1.** \_\_\_\_\_! – Wake Up to your true condition. Unfortunately it's a common problem. When things are going well for a church it becomes all too easy to fall to a place where you take God for granted.

It's a trap that will lead a church into a false sense of accomplishment that God cannot, and will not affirm.

**#2. Strengthen What Remains** – What a shock it must have been to the proud members of the Sardis Church to think that you are doing well, only to hear the One you serve say that the majority of your ministry is dead in the water.

**Truth Point #2:** \_\_\_\_\_ is a powerful condition that keeps its victims chained in deception. A church cannot be revitalized unless it is willing to \_\_\_\_\_ as it really is.

A \_\_\_\_\_ from human achievement to God's empowerment was needed to bring Divine restoration for them.

**#3. Remember what you \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_** – They had **received** God's Grace, through the **hearing** of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Clearly they had gotten away from that because if they hadn't they would be ALIVE not DEAD. They needed to REMEMBER and RETURN.

**#4. Keep It** – in other words \_\_\_\_\_ God's Grace, and the Gospel as a daily reality of your \_\_\_\_\_ with Christ, and your ongoing \_\_\_\_\_ through His Spirit and Word.

Too many professing Christians see God's Grace, and The Gospel that empowers it, as steppingstones to Heaven. But they are spiritual realities meant to be lived out in our physical world each and every day.

#5. \_\_\_\_\_ – Each of the previous 4 parts of Jesus' prescription come down to this one word. Repentance is different from confession. Acknowledging a wrong is necessary, but acknowledgement of wrong without **turning** from wrong is nothing more than a hollow gesture.

**Truth Point #3:** God is not looking for hollow gestures, but a heart that \_\_\_\_\_ about a wrong, and \_\_\_\_\_ to walk in His righteousness away from the wrong.

Confession and Repentance are \_\_\_\_\_ of a heart that seeks God, walks with Christ, and surrenders to the Holy Spirit.

### Warning – VS3b

If the church in Sardis would follow Jesus' prescription then His life and favor will flow over them, renewing and restoring them to strength and effectiveness. But if not... **JUDGEMENT!**

Divine Judgement is typically not immediate. God usually gives room for repentance. In the days of Noah He gave 120 years for the world to repent. They didn't and when the rain came, they were caught by surprise.

In like manner a THIEF never announces the day or the hour of his coming This how Jesus said His judgement would come to this **lifeless church** if they did not repent. So, did they repent?

**VS4:** God always has His remnant, those who despite the overwhelming spiritual death around them still have life, still have a light. There is historical evidence that those faithful few **may** have persevered, and that others **may** have repented and lived in faithfulness for a while.

In the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century a church leader, Melito, a Christian Apologist and the Bishop of Sardis, demonstrated spiritual life and faithfulness to Christ. His ministry is a sign that the church was still vibrant at that time.

Also, that little church building standing adjacent to the Temple of Diana, built around 200 years after Jesus' letter to Sardis, stands as a testimony to a group of believers who for a time proclaimed the gospel, and made disciples of Jesus Christ in the shadow of a pagan temple.

## Reward – VS5

To those who **CONQUER**, i.e. preserve in their faith in Jesus Christ, (1 John 5:4-5) Jesus said they will be clothed in **white garments**. Revelation 6:11; 7:9,13-14; 19:8,14 all present “**white garments**” as a sign of righteousness.

Jesus goes on to say ... *and I will never blot his name out of the **book of life**. I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.*

The **Book of Life** is mentioned 7 times in the New Testament. It is said to have the names of the redeemed written in it. Question: Can someone's name be taken out of The Book of Life? **No!** The names recorded in the Book of Life will never be removed. **WHY?** Because they were written there before the creation, before any human lived, before anyone did any good or any wrong. The redeemed are held secure in the hand of God!

**Truth Point #4:** “Conquering,” as Jesus puts it, is not the responsibility or work of the individual believer, but of the \_\_\_\_\_.

**Ephesians 1:13-14** emphatically state that the Holy Spirit is the believer's \_\_\_\_\_ that they will \_\_\_\_\_ in the faith, until they come into the \_\_\_\_\_ of their salvation in the presence of Christ.

**Truth Point #5:** When my \_\_\_\_\_ is **resurrected** and **transformed** into the likeness of Christ's resurrection body, then my **redeemed** \_\_\_\_\_, in concert with my **enlivened** \_\_\_\_\_ will enjoy the fullness of salvation.

Eternal Life, sinless perfection in my Soul, Spirit, and Body. That is the \_\_\_\_\_ of God and it is assured by Jesus Christ.

## Wrap Up

Contact Information  
[mrose@themiissionsm.org](mailto:mrose@themiissionsm.org)  
515-664-2460