

November 26th, 2017  
Pinecrest Baptist Church  
a.m.

Sermon Series: What the Spirit Saith to the Churches  
Sermon #6 Title: The Dark that Doesn't Shine  
Sermon #6 Text: (Revelation 3:1-6)

I've heard too many preachers, and read too many commentaries use this illustration for this passage not to use it. It is probably one of the most accurate ways to describe what was going on in the church at Sardis . . .

Scientists tell us that light travels at 186000 miles a second. The distance that light travels in one year is called a light year. – Meaning that the Light we see from the stars, left many years ago in order for you to see them in the night sky.

According to KQuest Science Media of Northern California

- The most distant star visible to the naked eye is 4000 light years away . . .
- the Star named Deneb in the Cygnus Constellation is 1500 light years away . . .
- Alpha Centauri, the star closest to the earth is 4.3 light years away . . .

What does all that mean? – That means those stars could burn out centuries before we would know it . . . the remnant of their light would be all there way, but the actual source could be gone . . . and no one would know.

- As a matter of fact, if the Sun in the Sky burned out, it would be 8 minutes before it got dark on earth.
- It is possible in Physics for the Light to be out, and no one know it.

At the Church in Sardis, the only Light that shone was from the past, their source had burned out.

- They are the opposite of Smyrna –

They looked Dead, but were Alive

Sardis Looks Alive, but is actually dead, and as we sit outside the office and listen in, we hear what Jesus had to say to a dead church.

- It is imperative to remember, that what Jesus says to Sardis, is intended for all to hear, who will hear.

## I. The Right View of Jesus

\*Note – Every one of these letters begins by getting to know Jesus more clearly.

- All right thinking, all right living, begins and ends with knowing and understanding who Jesus is, not as we see Him, but as He reveals Himself to us!

- He never paints Himself as a sentimental figure - like some would see Him; rather He unveils Himself with a fundamental picture of Who He is.

Many people love a “sentimental” view of Jesus. They love having a warm fuzzy feeling about Him, and speak of Him in ways that present Him as a “feel good figure” who just wants everyone’s life to be padded with sweetness, and protected by tolerance.

\*Note – That is not the picture Jesus unveils to the church at Sardis.

-Like the 4 previous churches, Sardis had lost the reality of Jesus in the fog of their religious routines. – And this is His sharp awakening of them back to the reality they were sleeping through.

- He plants in their mind two intrinsic qualities of Jesus that are necessary for every church to remember, and never tune out from:

***A. In His Supreme Power*** – “the Seven Spirits of God”

\*Note – What are the “Seven Spirits of God.” –

The Bible says in 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7 – “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.”

\*Note – Now if there is only one Holy Spirit, the third person of the trinity, what is Jesus talking about? The good news is that we don’t have to wonder.

**1.) Revelation 4:5** – “And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and *there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.*

**2.) Revelation 5:6** – “ And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and *seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.*”

\*Note – Now when you put those verses together you are given a twofold explanation from the Bible of what the “seven Spirits of God” are.

The Seven Spirits of God ARE:

- 1) seven lamps of fire burning before the throne
- 2) the seven eyes (of the slain Lamb) which are the sent forth into all the earth.

\*Note – now that clears that up . . . right?

\*Note – They are the “flames before the throne” and the “eyes sent throughout the earth.”

- 3.) Write this verse down - Isaiah 11:2 – “And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom

and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;”

\*Note- Now the book of Revelation speaks of the Seven Spirits of God; that are flames before the throne, and eyes throughout the earth – Isaiah speaks about them like they are no mystery at all.

The Seven Spirits of God:

The Spirit of the LORD – Jehovah – His Name known by His Redeeming Will.

The Spirit of Wisdom

The Spirit of Understanding

The Spirit of Counsel

The Spirit of Might

The Spirit of Knowledge

The Spirit of Fear (Reverence)

These sum up the sevenfold characteristics of the Reality of God.

- They are before the Throne of God
- And sent throughout the earth of man
- They are under the authority and used by the ability of Jesus Christ.

- Matthew 28:18 – “All power is given me in heaven and in earth.”

\*Note – Now all of that being said, Jesus said to them Remember that I am the One who has all Redemption, Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Might, Knowledge and Reverence under My Control, and at My Disposal!

\*Note – But note the next thing, this isn’t just some mysterious fact far removed everyday life. Some people think about these aspects of Jesus like they do the planet Neptune – it’s nice to know, but what’s that have to do with anything?

- that has to do with EVERYTHING

- when the things of Jesus aren't THE focus in our function, we are disconnected with all of the electricity in His Redemption, Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Might, Knowledge and Reverence.

\*Note – In Sardis, Jesus takes these spirits from their Mystical Memories, and Plants them Firmly before their Visible Eyes . .

**B. In His Functional Presence** – “and the seven stars”

\*Note – There is no mystery here at all . . . 1:20 – “The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand . . . The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches.” – Literally the messengers, and most likely the pastors.

1.) I am the one with the Flames before the Throne, My Eyes before the Earth, and your pastors in my Hands.

\*Note – Sometimes when we think about being in the hand of God we think about the comforting security that represents . . . but may I say to you that the Bible also pictures that for us in a non-comforting way.

Hebrews 10:31 – “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

\*Note – This was not intended to be a comfort to them, but an awakening.

- The “Mystery of the Spirits” was made real in His dealings with the pastors.

If Judgment begins at the house of God – Judgment in the House of God begins at Pastor in the House of God.

- The Lord had Seen and Heard the Messages that were being Preached.

- The Lord had Seen and Heard the Responses of the People.

- Not mystically, but actually, and Sardis needed to wake up to that fact.

## II. The Real View from Jesus

\*Note – This is a church that receives NO commendation. There was categorically nothing commendable in them. – There is nothing for us to emulate, or learn from in their example. Jesus gives them their scorecard -

### A. Their Current Assessment

\*Note – now here's what Jesus said – “thou hast a name that thou livest”

- This had to be a reputation among the other churches. – The world has never noted, or admired the well-being of one of the Lord's churches. – Only people interested in religion would care.

- But among people who cared about such things – they were the cat's meow.

- they were considered to be the “gold standard” among Christian churches, and the religious world.

- they would have been active

- they would have been well attended

- they would have had the attention of the town

\*Note – And may I say there is nothing wrong with those things . . . as long as Jesus is the One doing it!

- Everyone who knew enough to care, thought this is the place to be! Everyone except Jesus that is.

1.) A Dead Church – “thou hast a name that livest, and art dead.”

\*Note – To borrow from the Coroner of Munchkin land of OZ – “Is morally, ethic'ly, spiritually, physically, Positively, absolutely, Undeniably and reliably Dead . . . As Coroner I must aver, I thoroughly examined her. And she's not only merely dead, she's really most sincerely dead.”

\*Note - Now how do you have a “dead church” that is still recognized by the Lord as His church?”

- \*Note – Now this very well could have been called “The First Baptist Church of the Lost.”

- How does the Lord lay claim to a Lost church?

- it was now, not what it used to be . . .

- it had historically been a Living,  
Breathing, Growing, Going, and  
Glowing church.

- However the church began, it did begin the  
only way that a Church Jesus would claim  
began . . . saved, baptized people, in covenant  
together to serve and worship Him.

- What was right, had become overtaken by  
what was wrong.

- there were things that barely remained

- there were names that had not strayed

But – people began to claim the religion, without the  
repentance. Over the years, people became members of the  
church Professing Jesus, but the reality was they did not  
Possess Jesus.

- Whatever they were thinking, the result was that they lived  
as though the “reputation” for being a Christian, counted for  
being a Christian . . .

- They are like the people Paul warned Titus about in Titus  
1:16 – “They profess that they know God; but in works they  
deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every  
good work reprobate.”

- There were far more lost people living like they were saved,  
than there were saved people living like they were saved.

## 2.) A Dying Ministry

a.) “Strengthen the things that remain  
that are ready to die...”

\*Note – He is not talking about the saved people, because no  
saved person is about to spiritually die.

The term “things that remain” is one word meaning “things  
that are remaining.”

- Jesus is speaking of those last vestiges of spiritual influence...

- the last effects of a once vibrant ministry powered  
by heaven itself.

\*Note – Preacher, I thought you said that they were a beehive  
of activity . . . they were! . . . what in the world does activity  
have to do with vibrant spiritual ministry . . .

- Spiritual ministry is when external physical service,  
actually electrifies internal spiritual results –

In other words, it is one thing to have a social gathering, it is  
another thing to have true spiritual fellowship

It is one thing to feed the hungry – and it is another thing to  
feed the hungry in the power and purpose of Jesus!

It one thing to help the hurting – it is another thing to help the  
hurting in the power and purpose of Jesus!

- Jesus essentially said to this church, “There is not  
much ministry left here, it is primarily activity.

“I have not found thy works perfect (Complete) before God.”

## 3.) Some Devoted People

a.) “thou hast a few names that have  
not defiled their garments.”

\*Note – Now here is a glory and a mystery – He condemned  
the church, but comforted some of the people.

- The church was judged as a church –

- But there were people within the church that received the  
Lord’s blessing –

- Remember in 2:23 what he told the church at  
Thyatira – “I will give unto every one of you according  
to your works.”

- Now that goes for all that is wrong, and all that is  
right!

There were those faithful few that that no doubt were part of those early days of genuine fire . . .

- They had never lost their love for both Jesus as their Lord and as the Word.

\*Note – Now that was the Lord's assessment of this congregational corpse.

### ***B. His Clear Requirement –***

\*Note – Jesus forewarns that He might forgive – He rebukes that there might be Repentance, and after He confronted them, He directed them about which way to go . . .

1.) *"Remember and hold fast"* – "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard . . ."

\*Note – The answer was not a new answer, it was an old one. The direction He had for them was not going to be the newest fad, but it would be the oldest truth . . .

\*Note – When anyone has fallen away, the first action the Lord instructs is to Remember, Remember, Remember, where Ministry actually happens . . .

- By receiving and hearing . . . by receiving and hearing!  
Before they could do something, they first had to "receive something, and then hear something."

\*Note – They themselves had first "received the message of sin, the Savior, and Salvation – and then Heard the Word of the Lord – which is where all ministry begins!

- That's not new and out front, that is old, and never changes.

2.) *"Repent and obey quickly"* –

\*Note – This is the ultimate expectation of the Jesus every time He speaks – Repentance!

- It was not enough to say, "Oh-yeah!" we sure do need to make a change, and go back to the way the old faithful people used to – He expects them to

DO It – Not merely Remember it, and not merely Say it.

\*Note – It is never enough to agree on the changes that need to be made in our lives. – In fact for us to Know So, but NOT do so, makes us double guilty!

- "To knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." – James 4:17

Furthermore to know so, but not do so, isn't just double guilt, it is being delusional on purpose . . ."

James 1:22 – "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."

\*Note – Now what exactly was it that the Jesus wanted them to do – What was it specifically that they were Not doing, that He expected them to Start doing?

- To Wake Up, and actually CARE about Him, His Word, His Will, and His Way – getting their attention OFF the world outside, and setting it on the LORD inside!

- vs 2 – "Be watchful" – alert, awake, and attentive

- vs 3 – "if therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee"

\*Note – If there is anything the Lord expects of all His people that echoes through the halls of the New Testament is for the attention of His people's lives to be on Him and to Him through His Word and His Church.

Colossians 3:2 – "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."

- In just a 3 minute top water search of the scriptures, I found at least 10 passages in the New Testament instructing Christians to have the attention of their lives to be focused on the things of the Lord.

\*Note- For far too many people at Sardis, the focus of their lives was on active but empty religion, and social living – with the Word, Will, and Way of the Lord being at best in their peripheral vision.

### ***C. His Coming Judgment***

\*Note – There is a punishment awaiting the church at Sardis, and the pastor at Sardis, if the Lord doesn't see immediate submission and reaction . . .

1.) "I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee."

- This is not a coming "for them" it is coming "to them" and it is not a coming in Grace, but a coming in punishment.

- What is the punishment?

- He will take from them all they had
- their privilege
- their reputation
- their identity
- their existence
- their use in Kingdom Work
- He will take from them all things they treasured, and all things they should have treasured.

\*Note – In Ezekiel 34:7-10 - the Lord addressed the Shepherds of his people, and the pastors of His people, and I read this with fear . . . but listen

"Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD; As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock; Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD; Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them."

- Know this – For every word a preacher proclaims pertaining to the judgment of God, He has a Word of Judgment for the pastors and preachers, and He will come in Judgment on a Nation, a Church, a pastor, to take all they hold precious, . . . if they cease to hold Him, His Will, His Word, and His Way as most precious.

\*Note – But the letter does end there. The Right View of Jesus, the Real view From Jesus – but here is the Redeeming View about Jesus

### **III. The Redeeming View about Jesus**

\*Note – Pay attention to the Lord's Word for those individual people, who of their own accord, are given completely over to Him . . .

#### ***A. The Faithful Few are Named by Jesus***

1.) "Thou hast a few names, even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments."

What does it mean that they had not "defiled their garments?"

- Biblically, garments are associated with so much concerning our salvation . . .

- We are made kings and priests – priestly garments
- We are invited to a wedding feast – wedding garments
- When we arrive in glory we will be "clothed in white robes"
- When Jesus speaks of their garments He is speaking of what He has given them . . .
  - And there were those who ran His salvation through the mud –
  - But there were those that had not! – They had been faithful in focus, in fervor, and in the faith that saves!
- And Jesus new them by NAME!



\*Note – The irony here is the fact that Sardis lived as though they had a name that they were alive – Yet Jesus said, The Name Your Church has, is a lie – but there are some in your church that are not, and I know their Names!

(That is the line between heaven and hell, between ruin and redemption – Who Jesus Knows and Names!)

### ***B. The Following Few are Claimed by Jesus***

1.) “they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy”

a.) They shall walk with me! – The ultimate and highest honor and greatest glory for any one is to “Walk with Jesus.”

\*Note – Now someone may say, “I can’t wait to walk in white” – I can’t wait to walk with Jesus! – Now I can’t walk with Jesus unless I’m in the white robe that He gives me, but the robe is not the ultimate goal, but to walk with Jesus! – and Have HIM CLAIM ME!

\*Note – What does it mean to be “worthy.” – It means to have seen your salvation the way Jesus sees it, and to let His salvation live you the way He wants to live it.

### ***C. The Final Few are Famed by Jesus***

1.) vs 5 – “He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and *I will not blot out his name out of the book of life*, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.”

\*Note – I want to tell you what will happen to those who do not overcome – those who will not trust The Lord and His Word – they will be blotted out of the book of the Living. That is another way to express, eternal death.

- But to those who will entrust themselves to the Lord Jesus and His Word, that will not happen! – What Will Happen?

a.) “I will confess His name before my Father, and before His angels.”

\*Note – What a moment! What a Day! – When the Lord Jesus announces before the Father, and all the angels of heaven that Jeffrey Marlin Haney belongs to Him and by grace With Him!

December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2003, my brother who worked for then President Bush invited me to the White House Christmas party. Part of the invitation included a moment with the President and a photo with him. When we finished our meal, we went to the place appointed to us, and stood just outside the Green Room in the White House. Two armed guards approached us, and escorted us to the doorway. As we stood there in the door way, A Marine guard declared, Mr. Jared Haney from your office, and his brother Mr. Jeff Haney from Arkansas to see you Mr. President. And that Marine guard escorted us to the President and the First Lady, and handed us off to them, and their handshakes and welcomes.

- The hair on the back of my neck stood up . . .

But I am here to tell you, that won’t even rise to the level of a silent grin, when the Lord Jesus announces my name to the God of all Creation –

- I have no idea how it will happen, and don’t even pretend to think of it as so . . . but using the white house protocol, it would be a Serving Angle declaring - “Your Son Jesus Christ, and His Redeemed – Jeffrey Haney

Conclusion: He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.