

Letter to Church in Sardis

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 03 July 2016

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 0 0] Good morning and a warm welcome to church this morning and those who are visiting us especially we extend a warm welcome to you it's good to see some familiar faces back with us and you're warmly welcomed and please if you're able to stay at the end there's tea and coffee which will be served at the end of the service one or two intimations i'm not going to go through everything in detail because you now have these sheets and i'm grateful to adrian for taking that job on i want to see a wee word about the evening service tonight evening service will be at six it will be conducted by myself and we're going to we're going to be at the beginning of ephesians chapter six tonight so the last time we were in ephesians we were thinking about wives and husbands that uncomfortable passage tonight we're thinking about parents and children and i'm going to be speaking particularly to the parents and also particularly to the children so boys and girls tonight if you're able to come please do so because half the sermon will be especially for you course of the week there's various things happening ladies bible study as usual holiday club meeting on uh tuesday at half past six to half past seven in the committee room in the hall here and the road to recovery meeting is as usual tuesday at eight o'clock uh something to note about the prayer meeting on wednesday evening the prayer meeting we've not been able to uh book the hall this wedding stay come in welcome morning good to see you good to have you visiting with us tea and coffee at the end of the service as well i was just saying so please um stay here able to be great to get the chance to meet with you afterwards we're going to one or two intimations just just now wednesday evening we've not been able to put the hall this wednesday there's a wedding happening this week and so the prayer meeting will be relocated just for this week only to the old primary school uh time will be as usual half past seven i hope to be on holiday from thursday of this week for three weeks and during that time if there's any pastoral issues that come up you have the choice of two ministers so you're going to be doubly blessed in my absence rory morrison will be available and if you need to speak to rory then speak to the elders first and they'll have his details uh andrew cobble also will be around for the duration of the three weeks so if you would like to speak to him instead uh then you can go directly to andrew or to the elders first if you want the services next sunday will be at 11 and 6 as usual and in the morning gordon will be preaching gordon mcleod and the evening uh anthony latham will be taking the service two more one more information sorry two more information uh one is to say that in the manse which has been worked on just now dan phoned me yesterday he said there's areas of uh the house which they'd like to strip wallpaper and wood chip off so if you have a free evening or two this week uh then please go up there dan has instructions written he says he'd be very happy for any uh labor that uh comes up over the course of the next few days final thing is if the deacons court elders and deacons could go to the committee room at the end and we want to meet just for two minutes so these i think are all the intimations and we're going to begin now worshiping god and singing to his praise we sing from psalm 103 and from verses 1 to verse 5 and you'll find them on the screen

oh thou my soul bless god the lord and all that in me is be stirred up his holy name to magnify and bless
oh my soul the lord thy god and not forgetful be of all his gracious benefits he hath bestowed on thee down to the end of verse 5 to god's praise we stand to sing
oh my soul the lord and all that in me is be said oh my soul the lord and all that in me is be said
and all that in me is to sing oh my soul the lord thy god and not forgetful be of all his holy name to magnify and bless
to magnify and bless
bless bless oh my soul the lord thy god and not forgetful be of all his holy name to magnify and bless

O my soul, the Lord thy God, I have not forgiven thee.

Of all his gracious benefits, He hath bestowed on thee.

All thine iniquities to God Most graciously forgive.

[6 : 04] Who lighteth Jesus, O our faith, Doth heal and be relieved.

Who doth redeem My life thou thou, To death mayst not go down.

Who thee with love and kindness doth And tender mercies crown.

Who with abundance of good things, Doth satisfy thy love, So that dear not the eagles' age renew
Renewed is thy youth.

Let's unite our hearts in prayer. Let's pray for you. Our heavenly Father, We thank you for this day,
And we thank you for the fact that you have promised that as you command us to come together and worship,
You will present yourself here with us.

[7 : 59] We meet this morning in the name of Jesus, Our Saviour and our Lord. We meet in the name of the one who died and who rose again.

And we thank you today that we remember, As we do each Lord's day, That Jesus lives and he reigns.
He is seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven.

We thank you that he hears and makes intercession for us, Taking our imperfect prayers, The prayers that we are not able to properly articulate.
And he is the one who presents them perfectly at the throne.

The prayers that are spoken and the prayers of our hearts, Even in the silence just now that are unspoken.
We thank you that Jesus takes these prayers and presents them to the God who hears and who answers our prayer.

We thank you for the privilege that we have of prayer. We thank you for the privilege that we have of being able to say that you are our God.
We thank you that we are called into this relationship with the eternal, almighty, living God.

[9 : 13] And we thank you for all that we receive as we seek to come to you. And Lord, as we seek to rest in your presence.

We thank you for the psalm that we have sung. And the richness of all that we are taught in that psalm.
And we thank you for the psalm that we are reminded that you are the gracious God.

And when we deserve nothing but punishment for the sin that is within each one of us, You have in Christ shown us not punishment but salvation and blessing.

We thank you for the psalm that we are the psalm that you are the psalm that is within each one of us who is here in the Lord.
We thank you that the invitation is extended to us, even this morning. That we are to come to him and find rest for our souls and forgiveness of our sin.

and purification from all unrighteousness. We thank you that you are our gracious God. We thank you that you are the God who is with us in life and who knows us in every situation and every experience.

[10 : 22] And Lord, we thank you also that you are the God who is with us as we come to the end of our lives. Even in the verses that we have read, who doth redeem thy life that thou to death mayst not go down.

Lord, we thank you for the wonder of that promise that the redemption that Christ has paid for by his blood is a redemption that frees us from the clutches of death, from the tyranny of Satan, salvation from the prospect of hell. And we thank you, Lord, that in Christ as we put our faith in him and as we receive his grace, we are assured that heaven is the place that is prepared for all who trust him.

We thank you for that truth which transforms everything about our perspective in life and transforms everything about our perspective on death and eternity.

So we ask, Lord, that you would draw near to us this day as we seek to draw near to you once more. We pray, Lord, that we would know the reality and the richness of your nearer presence.

We pray that you would guide us in worship, that as we sing, that you would inhabit the praises of your people. Lord, as we pray that you would direct our prayers, that we would pray in accordance with your will and that you would hear and answer.

[11 : 57] And Lord, we ask that as the word of God is sung and read and as we meditate upon it, that it may come to us in the power of the Holy Spirit that he would be our teacher and that he would be active in this place and in each one of our hearts.

We pray for those of us, those of the congregation who are absent this morning, some who are in hospital. And Lord, we pray for those even taken to hospital yesterday.

We ask, Lord, that you would draw near to them, that you would minister to them, that they would know that they are remembered and that they would know your strength and find refuge in you, even in these moments.

And Lord, we pray for others who are on holiday and who are attending to various things in different parts of the country. And we ask, Lord, for your blessing upon them.

We thank you for those visiting with us this morning and we pray that you would bless and refresh them in the time that they have here. And Lord, we ask that you would meet each one of us as you know us at the point of our need.

[13 : 06] We pray on for those who are grieving and we ask, Lord, that they would find you to be the God of all comfort. We pray for those who do not yet know you and we pray that even this morning as we think upon the gospel call, Lord, that there would be some who would respond and for the first time find that they come to know Jesus.

And Lord, we ask that you would be with all of us. You know our needs, Lord, and we pray that you would meet with us. We pray for our country at a time of great instability.

We thank you that you are the sovereign God and we pray that you would give us the faith to trust you and we pray that those that you are allowed to be in leadership over us in due course that they would humble themselves and that they would look to you.

And we pray for a world that is broken, a world that groans, waiting for the redemption of Christ. And Lord, we pray that you would minister to those who are suffering today in different places and especially those who are part of the church of Jesus Christ.

Lord God, we are secure in the sense that we do not worship in fear but we remember many who do and we ask, Lord, that you would be with our brothers and our sisters who are suffering in different parts of the world and that you would bless them and that you would protect them as they come together in your name.

[14 : 48] Hear our prayers, cleanse us from our sin we pray, fill us with the Holy Spirit and lead us in worship. And we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Boys and girls, would you like to come forward please?

very well she did very well she got all the yellows she got oh that's all she got all the yellows she got a lot of blues a lot of orange a lot of green a lot of red but there's still a few there's one section she wasn't quite finished on so she did very very well but never quite got it finished but I think if we'd given her one more minute she probably would have seen the thing about the Rubik's Cube I discovered I never was able to do the Rubik's Cube but I went online one day and I thought I typed in how to do a Rubik's Cube and I discovered that there's actually a way of doing it Nicky is it?

[21 : 52] it's not just a case of like me going through it and trying to figure it out and looking at one face and doing a bit of this and a bit of that there's a very clear way that you have to follow if you're going to do the Rubik's Cube but for me it's just a puzzle that I can't crack and boys and girls look at the Rubik's Cube there's a lot of people and they look at life and it's a lot like this and you'll find some people and they'll wonder to themselves why am I here?

and where did I come from? and what am I here for? and when I die where am I going to go? and they're like me with a Rubik's Cube and they'll think about this and they'll think about that and they'll go online and they'll look at YouTube and they'll look at websites and they'll pick up one book and they'll pick up another book and then they'll go to people who are supposed to be clever and they'll say what do you think and what do you think and then they'll scratch their heads a bit more and they'll say well I think this and I think that and the more they think the more they're like me with a Rubik's Cube going back and forth trying to do it myself and I can never do it myself how do we know who is the one who can tell us where we came from and why we're here and where we're going and what we're for Ailey you put your hand up first who who can tell us

God can tell us can't he he can tell us everything and where do we where do we find out what God has to think Bethany the Bible so if we want to know why we're here and if we want to know what we're for and if we want to know how we can when we die get to heaven who do we listen to go on John Roddy you're so enthusiastic yeah Jesus do you remember the song that you sang last Sunday that tells us all about that what does it go like Jesus loves me this I know that tells us about who we are yeah but do you remember do you remember the other song that you sang what was that song can you remember all the words for it something about

Jesus being the king he is the king of the jungle yeah Jesus is the help us out Sunday school teachers here please what's the what was the song you sang last Sunday Jesus Natalie what was that I am the way the truth and that's what Jesus says I am the way with my life that's what Jesus says one more time hi I am the way truth and life that's what Jesus says we're getting a tune now one more time I am the way with my life that's what Jesus says so if we want to know the way if we want to know the truth if we want to know how we can have ever, ever, ever, ever lasting life we don't try and figure it out ourselves like me with a Rubik's Cube we go to the Bible, we go to John 14 6 for one verse in particular and we remember that Jesus is the way and he is the truth and he is the life. Okay, let's be quiet now close our eyes, hands together and let's pray thank you Lord Jesus that you are the way and you tell us the way that we are to live our lives and you tell us the way for us to get to heaven when we die. Thank you that you are the one who tells us the truth. There's other people who tell us lots of different things and there's places that we can look and people we can listen to and they tell us lots of things but they're not the truth but we thank you that Jesus tells us always the truth and we thank you that Jesus is the one who gives everlasting life to every one of us as we put our faith in him as we make him our saviour and as we follow him as our king.

And we thank you for all of us in Jesus name. Amen. Thank you boys and girls for listening. We're going to sing now and we're going to sing about how we are to come to Jesus and stay close to Jesus.

[27 : 01] Mission Praise 1164 1164 We'll stand to sing.

Turn now in our Bibles to Revelation and chapter 3 Revelation and chapter 3 Revelation and chapter 3 Revelation and chapter 3 And we come to the letter to the church in Sardis So just a short reading Revelation and chapter 3 and from verses 1 to verse 6 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 not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God Remember therefore what you have received and heard Obey it and repent But if you do not wake up 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 He who overcomes will like them be dressed in white I will never blot out his name from the book of life But will acknowledge his name before my father and his angels He who has an ear let him hear what the spirit says to the churches Amen And may God bless that reading of his word to us Now I am going to ask Donald McSween to come and lead us in prayer in Galilee please

Thank you I remember it Of course He will show you Whenever you go Withali From different things And For eachuss You will know In your values You have to be For me And Hopefully Let us know We will come So All the why Let us know And So We haven't to live.

That is a message that will know what Jesus thinks. He will feel healing for blood and Why will not let goodology think of him.

[30 : 41] Only antis begrów for self- kindness Yes crying out loud, was involved in some concerts families had■'s unusual Happy Peace.

to tryen during our time. We believe there are Kurōnji Sánik Balima.

people Lay on air But the a and he was on the grass, and then there were ends of the loss, all the valid fairs and hospitals didn't mess them together.

I always wanted to give my studies to help me tell you that. And make me ask you to become a sailman because I shot your Heckman I realized everything started Damit and focus on your journey.

Everyone is fighting with us. While we are doing this, that brings us to the covenants, Why have we not been lost? Because it is not everything we get...

[33 : 25] So that we were going to have a beautiful strijun■■■. And we are going to slowly make a new patient numbers, New and THAAA Saturday morning and live.

And the monumental amount of people, JONATHAN GROSSES The Lord is the Son of God.

The Lord is the Son of God. The Lord is the Son of God.

The Lord is the Son of God. The Lord is the Son of God.

The Son of God is the Son of God. Amen. We sing again to God's praise, this time from Psalm 16.

[35 : 07] Psalm 16. And at the end of that psalm, this is a psalm that looks forward to Jesus and the resurrection of Christ.

And we sing the last two verses of the psalm in Gaelic. I'll read these verses in English. Because my soul, engraved to dwell, shall not be left by thee, nor will thou give thine holy one corruption to see.

Thou wilt me show the path of life, of joys that is full stored, before thy face, at thy right hand, are pleasures evermore. These two stanzas we sing in Gaelic and we remain seated to sing.

where the Jew is risen of the earth, shall not be right with thee, as ■ Thank you.

Thank you.

[37 : 01] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word.

We thank you for the fact that it's been preserved for us over the generations that has been inspired by the Holy Spirit. We thank you that your word is useful every age, every generation for teaching and for correction and for rebuke and for encouragement.

[39 : 17] And Lord, we come under the authority of your word this morning and we ask that you would teach us, that you would prepare our hearts that they would be like good crime.

And Lord, that you would plant your word deep within our hearts, that it would take a week and that we would see Christ and hear Christ. And Lord, that we would be challenged to receive Christ and all that he offers to us in himself.

So hear our prayers and help us and teach us, we pray. And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, Revelation chapter 3, the passage that we read.

And as I said, over the last few weeks, we've been reading through Jesus' letters to his churches. And as we've said before, although these letters were written to particular churches at a particular time, we've been seeing as we've progressed through chapters 2 and now into chapter 3, that these letters are relevant to every church at every time.

And we come today to this letter to the church in Sardis. And it's a short letter. Let's read it once more. From verse 1.

[40 : 43] To the angel of the church in Sardis write. These are the words of him who hosts 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 not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God.

Remember therefore what you have received and heard. Obey it 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. He who overcomes will like them be dressed in white.

I will never blot his name out of the book of life. But will acknowledge his name before my father and his angels. He who has an ear.

[41 : 44] Let them hear what the spirit says to the churches. So there we have the letter of Christ.

As John is given that letter. And it's a letter that's addressed to this church in Sardis. And it's a short letter. But it's a shocking letter.

It's an alarming letter this one. And that's purposeful because this church in Sardis had become complacent. And then it seems to have slipped from complacency into a spiritual coma.

And so the alarm call of Christ to this church is wake up. So let's give some thought to the letter that we have before us.

First of all by way of introduction and by way of context. What do we know about Sardis as an actual place? Well we know that Sardis was a rich city.

- [42 : 49] And that's our first point. We see that Sardis was a rich city. And the people in that city. It seems that they felt untouchable. Because of their riches. We go back and we look at the history books. And we do a little bit of research into that city.
- It was rich because the location of the city was located on fertile ground. On a plain between two valleys. And so whatever was planted seemed to grow in great abundance.
- And so there was huge provision. And there was huge wealth for those who lived there. Because what was grown could be sold. So trade in Sardis was always brisk.
- But it wasn't just what was in the ground. There was a river going through the centre of that city. And it seems that the river also was full of riches.
- [43 : 49] And we're not talking salmon. We're talking gold. One historian, as they were writing about Sardis. They said that it seemed that nature had conspired to pour riches into the city.
- So Sardis was rich. It was rich from what was in the ground. It was rich from what was going through the centre of the city in terms of the river.
- It was also rich in terms of protection. And if you look at photographs of Sardis as a city, you can see that immediately. Sardis was a place that was located on a ridge of mountains.
- So it was protected on three sides by this steep ridge of mountains. It was built on the foothill of this mountain range. Perpendicular cliffs, 1,500 feet high on three sides.
- And anybody who looked at Sardis with a view to attack was fearful. Because the very architecture of the city was just like a fortress.
- [45 : 01] It seemed absolutely impenetrable though. That's not the right word, but you know what I'm trying to say. And so all who lived inside Sardis were secure in their minds.
- They were secure in their minds because of the protection afforded. They were secure because when they looked at their monthly statements from the bank. Because of the money coming in through what was sown and what was taken from the river.
- They were rich. And so they felt secure in their riches. And that's a fact, isn't it? That we struggle with if we are those who are rich.
- And I suppose when we look at ourselves in terms of the whole world picture. All of us are rich. And when we feel that we are rich.
- When we feel like we are not lacking. That we're secure. Spiritually speaking, we become self-reliant. We can become complacent because we have less of a sense day by day by day of our need of God.
- [46 : 15] You'll remember the man who spoke at the induction here some year and a bit ago now. Donnie Livingston from North Carolina.
- I'll never forget Donnie. How he would speak about his childhood. And they had nothing as a family. His mum and his dad were lost at a very early age.
- And so his granny brought him up. She had nothing. And they would get to some days and the granny would call the children together and say, We need to pray today.
- Because I haven't got any dinner for tonight. And so they would get round the table and they would pray. And time and time again, he would talk about how the local fishing would come with a bag.
- Stuff they couldn't sell. Last minute. Tummy grumbling. Nothing to eat. Praying for daily bread. And they would come. And he spoke about how that situation that he grew up in was a situation where they had such faith in God.
- [47 : 25] Because they were literally looking daily for bread. We're not. And so it's easy for us to become complacent.

Go back two generations here. Not talking about Donnie Livingston. But just if we think about our own people in this part of the world. Go back two generations.

The people had very little. Materially speaking. They weren't living in times of peace and security. Their minds were not at rest from the threat of attack.

Because these were days of war. But there was a deep sense of fear of. And faith in God. But over time.

As our standard of living has gone up. And as the threat of military action has gone down. Is it not true that Sardis syndrome.

[48 : 27] Maybe a second. With days of peace and stability. With days of political steadiness. There's been an erosion nationally.

In faith. And there's been a reliance upon ourselves. And that's where Sardis was. In AD 95.

I think that's where we have been. Nationally for some time now. But as I was preparing this this week. And the news on in the background.

And catching the headlines. It just struck me with great force. That even in the last 10 days. Everything's changing. Last 10 days.

Even. Has begun to show us. How insecure. What we actually think is secure. Is. But you see the panic in the eyes.

[49 : 30] Of the multi-millionaires. Who watch their bank balances. And they look at the pound. And as the pound was plummeting. The terror. Because all the security.

That they had. In the pounds that they were clutching. Was dissolving. And we listen to the political pundits. Who have such faith. Probably in the political system.

And the leaders. Who. Who are at the forefront of that system. And yet. Everything's crumbling. And so we live in interesting times.

And yes it's unsettling. But. My prayer. Is that through this. The sovereign God.

Will be at work. In our country. Causing us to wake up. And to look to him. For the strength. That he is able to give.

[50 : 31] The strength. That he calls Sardis. To look for in verse 2. So we see first of all. The rich city. The second point. That we see here.

Is. We see a reputable church. We thought about the city. And now we need to think about the church. Because Jesus. Is writing to the church. In Sardis.

And the church in Sardis. Was a reputable church. It was two or three weeks ago now. And there was somebody who was visiting. In the congregation.

And he came to the service. And as he was at the door. And shaking hands at the end. He spoke about how he was from somewhere down in the south of England. And he'd come along.

To the church. On this Sunday morning. Because his minister. Way down south. Had advised him. When he was in Harris. He should go to the free church of Scotland. And.

[51 : 27] In that moment. There was a degree of encouragement. Because you sort of think. Well somebody. Somewhere. Thinks we must have.

Some kind of a good reputation. It's nice to see you sir. Thank you for that. Word of encouragement. But. As we. Think about that.

In the light of what we're reading. About Sardis. We shouldn't ever be too quick. To encourage ourselves. Even. If others. May think that we.

Probably as a denomination. Rather than as a congregation. I expect. Have a good reputation. See the church in Sardis. Had a great reputation.

And if you were on holiday in Sardis. This was the church that you would seek out. This was the church that had. The good name. And when you got there.

[52 : 23] As you were handed the notice. See. There would probably be at least two sides. Jam packed. With things that were going on. In this congregation. See. They were known for their deeds.

They were known for the many things. That they were doing. The many. Works that they were pursuing. And the supposition was. That deeds. Equals life. And Jesus.

They were known for their life. They were known for their life. And Jesus. And Jesus. And Jesus. Knew that. He knew their reputation. He knew what people were saying about them. And that's why. He says to them in verse 1. I know your deeds. You have a reputation for being alive.

But despite their deeds. Despite their great reputation. Despite their many outreach projects. Despite their meetings.

And their events. And their whatever. Jesus comes in. And looks into this church.

[53 : 21] And he gives us diagnosis. In the form of just. A few words of. Devastating rebuke. So we have a rich city.

We have a very reputable church. And thirdly. As we get into the essence. Of the letter. We have this rebuke. And see if you. Just flick back for a moment.

To chapter 2. And you just scan. The letters thus far.

To the church in Ephesus. And the church in Smyrna. And the church in Pergamum. And the church in Thyatira. Every one of these letters thus far. Although there have been in some cases.

Things that Christ held against. And gave in the form of a rebuke. Every one of these letters. Has encouragements. There's commendations. Jesus says.

[54 : 20] Some of what I see. I like. Some of what I see. You're to be commended for. But when we come to Cyrus. There is no such.

Words of. Commendation. There are no such words. Of encouragement. This church. Has no. Cushioning of what was to come. There is only a stark rebuke.

Jesus says. In verse 1. I know your deeds. You have a reputation. Of being alive. But you are dead.

And try and put yourself. As I have. In the place. Of somebody. In the congregation. Of Sardis. Sitting. In one of the chairs.

Eagerly anticipating. What is Jesus. Going to say about us. We've heard about Ephesus. We've heard about Pergamum. We've heard about Thyatira. We've heard about Smyrna.

[55 : 26] And yet. We probably have a. Slightly better reputation. Than all these churches. I wonder what Jesus. Will say about us. And then you hear that.

I know your deeds. You have a reputation. Of being alive. Yes we do. But you are dead. Imagine the gasp.

That must have traveled. Through that congregation. And the other congregations. As this letter was read. Imagine. How hard. That must have been.

For those. In the congregation. To hear. And yet. That's what they had to hear. And that. Actually.

Is what every one of us. Needs to hear. Before we can truly become. Christ's ones. Before we become. Christians. Before we become.

- [56 : 27] Part of the true church. Of Jesus Christ. His bride. We need to hear. About our spiritual. Deadness. Our fallen state. As we are dead.
- And the world. Might look at us. In our lives. And the world. Might think. We look very good. We may appear. To be very. Clean living.
- Morally upright. We may have. A great reputation. Like many. In Sardis. Did. We may be active. In the community. Doing very many.
- Good deeds. That are valued. Within. The wider culture. But if that's. All we have. And if that's.
- What we're. Depending on. Then it's. Incomplete. And Jesus. Underlines.
- [57 : 20] That. About. The church. In. Sardis. Wake up. He says. I have. Not. Find. Your deeds. Complete.
- In the sight. Of my God. And you and I. May have. A whole. Portfolio. Of good deeds. That we want.
- To present. To God. And say. I did this. And I did that. And I've said. This for you. And I've said. That for you. But the problem. Is. Fundamentally.
- Every one. Of us. In our. Fallen state. Is dead. Ephesians. Chapter 2.
- Verse 1. The bleakness. That precedes. The light. Of the grace. Of Christ. Is thick. Paul says.
- [58 : 15] To the Ephesians. As he reminds them. Of where they were. As for you. He says. You were dead. In your transgressions.
- And sins. And Jesus. Wanted. The Ephesians. To see that. He wanted the church. In Sardis. To see that. He wants. Every one of us. To see that.
- Because it's not until we see that. About ourselves. That the grace of Christ. Can start to burst through. Into our lives.
- So we have this. Rebuke. That is given to this church. With a. A reputation. That is. Flawless. In a city.
- That was rich. And then. Fourthly. We come. To what. What is a resurrecting call. Right.
- [59 : 13] When you think about this. When Jesus. Pronounces. This church. In Sardis. As dead. One might expect.
- That's where the letter. Would finish. Because death. Is so final. And if it was anyone else. Who was writing this letter. This is where the full stop.
- Would be placed. But it isn't anyone else. This is Jesus. Who's writing. And Jesus. Is the one.
- Who said in John 11. I am the resurrection. And the life. Jesus. Is the one. Who's able to look upon death. With great defiance.
- He's the one. Who's able to overcome death. He is the one. Who's able to. Bring resurrection. From the dead. And bring those who trust him.
- [60 : 10] Into that resurrection life. That he. Himself. Is ushered in. And that's what Jesus calls this church. In Sardis. To do. Not to trust in themselves. Not to come with their.
- Lists of good works. Not to come with a CV. Of good reputation. Their works. Not to come with a CV. Not to come with a CV. But. Their works. Were incomplete. So Jesus.
- Was challenging. The incompleteness. Of their reputation. And their good works. In order that they would trust. In him. And in his.
- Completed. Finished work. Of salvation. And so Jesus. Calls them. In verse. Three.

To remember. What he. Himself. Taught them. Through the prophets. And the apostles. Jesus. Calls them. Not just. To remember. These things.

[61 : 08] But to obey. These things. Not to debate them. Not to set up. Committees. to consider the merits and the demerits of what he had passed on to them through the apostles.

But Jesus very starkly calls them to remember and then to obey. To turn from their sin. To turn from their self-reliance.

To turn from going their own way and to repent and trust in him. That's what Jesus called the church in Sardis to do.

Remember, he says, what I have done for you. Remember what I have taught for you and preserved for you through the apostles and the prophets. Obey it. Turn from going your own way.

And go my way. And that is still all these thousands of years later.

[62 : 19] What Jesus is calling us to do. It was for the church in Sardis. It's for the church in Stockinish. And Scalpe.

And Stockholm. And North Harris. And Stornoway. And Glasgow. And Edinburgh. And Aberdeen. And Johannesburg.

It's the same message. Jesus calls us. Not to trust ourselves. But to trust in him.

Not to look to ourselves. But to look to him. Isaiah 45. And verse 22. Look unto me.

And be ye saved. Acts 16. 31. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[63 : 18] And you shall be saved. Romans 10. 13. Everyone. Who calls. On the name.

Of the Lord. Shall be saved. Saved from death. Saved from sin. Saved from the clutches. Of Satan. Who wants to destroy us.

Eternally. And saved. Into life. That is full. And life. That is eternal. That's the offer. That's the.

Resurrecting call. That went out to Sardis. And comes out to us. This morning. A word of warning.

Here. If we. Fail to hear it. If we. Turn. Away from Jesus. If we. Continue to trust. In ourselves.

[64 : 16] And look to ourselves. And value. What other people. Say about us. Rather. Than what Christ. Says about us. There's that. Very sobering. Warning. If you do not. Wake up.

Says Jesus. I will come. Like a thief. And you will know. Not know. At what time. I will come to you. You check back.

In the history of Sardis. That happened twice. It looked to be. A place. That was. Impossible. To attack. And Sardis. Knew that. Better than anyone.

But. There's one. Account. In particular. Of. An attacking. Troop. Who. Made an approach. To Sardis. And they spent days. Just watching. The place. They were looking.

For the weak spot. And very quickly. They discovered. The weak spot. Was the people. They watched. The soldiers. And soldiers. In other cities.

[65 : 13] Were so alert. And they were so. Tuned in. To an attack. In Sardis. They were so. Self. Secure. They weren't.

Watching. And so. Sardis. Twice in his history. Was overturned. Because of their. Complacency. Their failure. To listen. And wake up.

And be alert. And in the spiritual sense. Again. Jesus says. You're in danger. And if they didn't. Wake up. If they didn't. Heave the call.

Of Christ. To receive him. As saviour. And follow him. As lord and king. Ultimately. They would meet him. As judge. And that's a sobering word.

For us also. Because the same. Applies. Jesus calls us. To wake up. But if we. Persist.

[66 : 10] In ignoring. His call. To receive. The salvation. That he has. Bought for us. With such a price. There is. Judgment. For those.

For those. For those. Who trust him. For those. Who look to him. The letter. Finishes. With such. A wonderful. Prospect.

Of a reward. That's our final point. There is a reward. What is the reward? For those.

For those. Who heed the call. Of Jesus. They will walk. With Jesus. And they will be made worthy. In Jesus. Jesus says.

They will walk. With me. And we know. From Ephesians. Four and five. Which we've been studying. That. To walk. With someone. Is another way. Of saying. To live with someone.

[67 : 05] To be close. With someone. To enjoy communion. With someone. And that's a Christian. A Christian. Is simply. Somebody.

Who knows. Jesus. In that personal. Intimate. Relational. Sense. Christian. Is not a.

A code. That we sign up to. It isn't a list of rules. That we tick the boxes for. It isn't a. A dead religion. That we determine. Historically.

We will. Follow. A Christian. Is someone. Who knows Christ. And for those. Who trust Jesus.

Jesus. Himself. Is our reward. He makes. Himself. Known to us. The God. Of eternity. Our creator.

[67 : 59] Our life. Giver. Our sustainer. Our savior. He doesn't.

Stand so far off. He makes himself. Known to us. And that. Knowledge. Of Christ. Begins. The moment. We trust him.

And it never ends. See. The relationship. That we have. With Jesus.

In time. If we are Christians. It's a troubled one. It's one that's under pressure. Because. If you're. Anything like me.

And you are. Then. We're wrestling. With sin. The apostle Paul. Writes in Romans 7. About this war. That's going on.

[68 : 52] In his heart. This wrestle. This. Angst. That he feels. Because. Of. The sin. That he was struggling with. We have an enemy. And he wants to do everything.

To get between us. And Christ. And spoil that relationship. That's. That's in life. We start to come to know Christ. But it's. A struggle. But in heaven.

That's where we go. To be with Jesus. And the father. And. The angels. And the spirit.

And all. The Christians. Who have gone. From time. Before us. And in heaven. There's no sin. And in heaven. There's no Satan.

So our walk. With Christ. Our relationship. With Christ. Which begins here. Is perfected.

[69 : 50] The reward. Is that we will walk. With Jesus. When we trust. In him. And finally. In just a word. We are made worthy.

In Jesus. Is somebody here today. Sitting here. Thinking. I could never become a Christian. Because look at my life.

And look at my heart. And look at the weight. Of the sin. That's on my shoulders. Look at how far. I have strayed from Christ. How many times. I have closed my ears.

To his call. I'm a right hook. I am unworthy. For heaven. I am unworthy.

For heaven. I am unworthy. For heaven. For heaven. For heaven. For heaven. For heaven. For heaven. For heaven. That's a painful. experience. To go through. When we are under that weight. Of conviction. But the good news is.

[70 : 46] That Jesus shows us. Our unworthiness. So that we will see our need of him. And when we see our need of him. We hear him call us.

To come. And to trust him. And ask that he will make us worthy. And walk with us. And whoever comes to him.

He will in no wise. Cast out. When we come to him. Confessing our sin. Our hands out. Saying I'm guilty.

And asking for his cleansing. He will never turn us away. For Jesus says. These people. When they come in that way.

When they heed my call. They will walk with me. Dressed in white. For they are worthy. He who overcomes.

[71 : 46] Will like them. Be dressed. In white. See it's Christ. Who takes. Our sin soiled clothes. From us.

Like the jacket we take off. That's soiled with our sin. Christ. Takes it from us. And then he takes his robes. Of righteousness. And he places them on us.

Worthy. White robes. We can't get to heaven without them. We can't roll up with our. Filthy rags. That we have crafted. But we can be assured.

That our names will be in. The book of life. And they will never. Be blocked out. If we are. Trusting in Christ. And in his.

Amazing grace. And so a letter. That begins. With such a. A stark. Rebuke. Draws to our conclusion.

[72 : 45] With such a rich. Reward. That is promised. To those. Who will respond. To the. Resurrecting call. Of Jesus.

So let's be encouraged. Today. If God has given us. Eyes to see. Our sin. And our saviour. If God has given us. Ears to hear. His word.

Let's be encouraged. To respond. To his life. Giving call. And just. As I finish. It strikes me.

That it's such a comfort. For us today. Having. Go through these letters. And come this week. To this one. Isn't it such a comfort.

That as. A congregation. Who acutely. Feel the loss. Of a brother in death. How much. Encouragement.

[73 : 41] Are we given. As we remember. That those. Who die in Christ. Trusting. In his amazing grace. Go on.

To find. Fullness of life. Walking. Eternal. With Jesus. As those. Who have been. Made worthy.

Not in themselves. But in him. Revelation 7. Then one of the elders.

Asked me. Says John. Those in white robes. Who are they? And where did they come from? I answered. Sir you know. And he said.

These are the. Who have come out. Of the great tribulation. They have washed. Their robes. And made them white. In the blood of the lamb. Therefore.

[74 : 39] They are before. The throne of God. And serve. On day. And night. In his temple. And he who sits. On the throne. Will spread his temple. Over them.

Never again. Will he hunger. Never again. Will he thirst. The sun. Will not beat. In them. Nor any. Scorching heat. For the lamb.

At the center. Of the throne. Will be their shepherd. He will lead them. To springs. Of living water. And God. Will wipe away. Every tear. From.

Their eyes. He who has an ear. Let them hear. What the spirit says.

To the churches. Let's pray. Amen. Our heavenly father.

[75 : 40] Father. We. Do pray. That you would give us. An ear. That we would hear. What you are saying to us. As part.

Of the church. Of Jesus Christ. Christ. We ask. Lord. That. If we have slipped. Any of us. Into. Complacency.

A self-reliance. But if there. Are those. Here. Today. Who have. Always. Been relying. On themselves. And never looked. To Christ. We pray. That we would heed.

That resurrecting. Call. To look. To. To trust. And. To call. Upon the name. Of the Lord. And find. Salvation. Salvation.

Where we. Are. Given. That privilege. Of beginning. In time. A walk. With Jesus. That will be made. Perfect. In eternity. And Lord.

[76 : 37] We thank you. That. As you. Show us. Our. Unworthiness. And our sin. And our deadness. We are. Enabled. As we. Respond.

To your call. To know. That we are. Made worthy. With the amazing. Grace. Of Jesus. By. The blood. That was shed. To take away. Our sin.

Hear our prayers. Continue with us. We pray. In Jesus name. Amen. We sing. To conclude. From mission. Praise. 31.

And the words. Also. On the screen. Mission. Praise. 31. Amazing grace. How sweet. The sound. That saved. A wretch. Like me. I once was lost.

But now. I am found. Was blind. But now. I see. And we stand. To sin. The whole. And now. May the grace. Of our Lord. Jesus Christ. And the love.

[77 : 32] Of God. The Father. And the fellowship. Of God. The Holy Spirit. Be with us all. Both now. And forevermore. Amen. Amen. His name.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.