

## Autopsy of a Dead Life

- **Revelation 3:1-3 (NLT)** *Write this letter to the angel of the church in Sardis. This is the message from the one who has the sevenfold Spirit of God and the seven stars: I know all the things you do, and that you have a reputation for being alive—but you are dead. Now wake up! Strengthen what little remains, for even what is left is at the point of death. Your deeds are far from right in the sight of God. Go back to what you heard and believed at first; hold to it firmly and turn to me again. Unless you do, I will come upon you suddenly, as unexpected as a thief.*
- *Sardis, capital of the ancient kingdom of Lydia, was undoubtedly the wealthiest city of its day. Located on a mountain plateau above the valley of Hermus at the junction of five main roads, it was renowned as both a military fortress and a commercial center. The famous author of fables, Aesop, lived here as did King Croesus, of whom it was said, “everything he touched turned to gold.” During his reign, Sardis introduced coinage to the world and effectively became the birthplace of modern money.*
- *And yet, not all was well in Sardis. By the time the risen Lord Jesus delivers His message to this church through John the Revelator, Sardis has seen its best days and has started to decline. Its long association with easy money, decadent pleasure and notorious immorality has led to a spirit of complacency, and Sardis has now become a name of contempt, even on pagan lips. Twice before in its history, Sardis had fallen to her enemies because of overconfidence and the failure of her guards, who fell asleep at their posts. The fact is that she has still not learned her lesson, and John warns that she is about to fall for the final time, only this time spiritually.*
- *The saddest indictment of all is that the church in Sardis has become like the city – alive in name only, and living on her past glory. There is deadness in the assembly because there is defilement among the assembled. Sardis has a reputation of life, but a reality of death. The name “apostolic” is written over her door, but the name “apathetic” should be inscribed over her heart. And because Christ means for His message to Sardis to be a warning to us as well, today we look into His Word so we can look into ourselves. May an honest diagnosis of our condition stir us today as the physician we call “the preacher” conducts an **Autopsy of a Dead Life.***
- The term “oxymoron” is from two ancient Greek words, OXUS meaning “sharp” and MOROS meaning “dull.” By this, the Greeks meant “a wise foolishness” or “a foolish wisdom.”

- This term has carried over into our modern lingo, where we define “oxymoron” as “a self-contradicting phrase.” Many oxymorons are humorous, like these favorites from the website oxymoronlist.com ...

From the world of politics ... **Government Organization**

From the world of music ... **Taped Live**

From the world of fashion ... **Tight Slacks**

From Revenue Canada ... **Tax Return**

From the world of wrestling ... **Head Butt**

From the world of fine dining ... **Jumbo Shrimp**

From the kitchen ... **Plastic Glasses**

From New Brunswick lingo ... **Pretty Ugly**

- One would think that the title of today’s message is an oxymoron ... “DEAD LIFE.” Is that a self-contradicting phrase? Sadly, when it comes to spiritual matters, it is an accurate diagnosis of mankind.
- You see, every person who has not had the experience of Biblical salvation is “DEAD WHILE THEY LIVE” because only the outer part of them (mind and body) is alive! Their spirit is dead, alienated from God because of sin. And unless they make a choice to change it, this is an eternal condition! Since the spirit is dead, the soul (mind) is now in charge. Led only by their intellect, emotions and will, such a person cannot understand spiritual concepts, for they are foreign to them. Their body becomes merely a tool for acting out their lusts and passions. They are merely “MORTAL,” which means “death-doomed” or “Satan-ruled.” And they are in serious trouble with God!
- **1 Corinthians 2:14 (KJV)** But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.
- In our English vocabulary, we use the word “dead” in a wide variety of applications. We say things like ...

Dead Water ... something that is stagnant

Dead Town ... something that is devoid of activity

Dead Party ... something that is lacking excitement

Dead Coals ... something that has grown cold

Dead Motor ... something that has broken down

Dead Volcano ... something that is dormant

Dead Language ... something that is no longer relevant

Dead Soil ... something that can no longer sustain life

Dead Wire ... something that is disconnected from its source

Dead Tired ... something that is worn out and exhausted

Dead Inside ... something that is numb or unresponsive

- All of these phrases could easily apply to the person who is attempting to live in this world without a relationship with the God who created them. In one sense, they are indeed “alive” because they can think, talk, move, relate, and exist. But in the deepest sense of life, in the spiritual sense, they are DEAD. (**repeat “dead” list**)
- Many people are exactly like those living in Sardis ... they have a REPUTATION that they are alive, but the REALITY is that they are spiritually dead! Life looks fine on the outside, but the inside paints a different picture. So, at the risk of being offensive today, we will conduct an autopsy on your life to find out what went wrong. (Christians, don't tune out this message! Churches can die too – that's exactly what happened in Sardis!)
- Could there be anything more gruesome spiritually than being dead and not even knowing it? And yet, it happens all the time. The Bible defines this “spiritual deadness” in a variety of ways ...

#### 1. Dead in Sin

**Ephesians 2:1 (KJV)** And you hath he quickened, who were **dead** in trespasses and sins;

#### 2. Dead in Pleasure

**1 Timothy 5:6 (KJV)** But she that liveth in pleasure is **dead** while she liveth.

#### 3. Dead in Legalism

**Romans 7:6 (KJV)** But now we are delivered from the law, that being **dead** wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

#### 4. Dead to Hope

**Ecclesiastes 9:4 (KJV)** For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a **dead** lion.

#### 5. Dead to Worship

**Psalms 115:17 (KJV)** The **dead** praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence.

### 6. Dead to Action

**James 2:14-17 (NLT)** Dear brothers and sisters, what's the use of saying you have faith if you don't prove it by your actions? That kind of faith can't save anyone. Suppose you see a brother or sister who needs food or clothing, and you say, "Well, good-bye and God bless you; stay warm and eat well"—but then you don't give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do? So you see, it isn't enough just to have faith. Faith that doesn't show itself by good deeds is no faith at all—it is **dead** and useless.

- Tragically, an honest autopsy would conclude that most of the people you have ever looked eyes with are DEAD WHILE THEY LIVE! Can anything be done? Is there any hope? What is the Biblical prescription for a dead life? What did God tell Sardis?

#### 1. WAKE UP!

- It's one thing to be asleep from exhaustion and quite another to be asleep from apathy. Every time the phrase “wake up” is used in the New Testament, it conveys the message that God's people are spiritually asleep when they should be awake!
- **Romans 13:11 (KJV)** And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.
- **Ephesians 5:14 (KJV)** Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

#### 2. STRENGTHEN WHAT REMAINS!

- If there is any spark of life in you, it will respond to God's Spirit today. Don't quench it – strengthen it! If you will take a step toward God, He will meet you!
- **Isaiah 42:3 (KJV)** A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench.
- **Isaiah 42:3 (NLT)** He will not crush those who are weak or quench the smallest hope.

### 3. REPENT!

- **Luke 13:3 (KJV)** I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.
- **Acts 3:19 (KJV)** Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;
- Some people define repentance as a **feeling** of sorrow for sin. That's right, but repentance is deeper than that! Some people define repentance as a **decision** to turn your life from sin toward God. That's right, but repentance is deeper than that! The Greek word for repentance is METANOIA, which means "to think differently." Literally, repentance is seeing your life as God sees it. You think that all this time you have been living, when God says you have been dead! Talk about a paradigm shift!
- God told the church in Sardis that if they would repent, He would not blot their names out of the Book of Life. Since it determines whether we spend eternity in heaven or hell, there is no more important document in history than God's Book of Life!
  - **Exodus 32:33 (KJV)** And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.
  - **Revelation 20:12 (KJV)** And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.
  - **Revelation 20:15 (KJV)** And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.
  - **Luke 10:20 (KJV)** Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.
- The Book of Life is real, but thank God it remains unpublished. What you decide about your life today will affect your life for eternity! Will you admit to yourself and to God that His diagnosis proves you have a "DEAD LIFE," or will you continue to go your own way? What can be done about a "DEAD LIFE" anyway? Not much, humanly speaking ... but with God all things are possible!
  - **Acts 26:8 (KJV)** Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?
  - **John 11:25 (KJV)** Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: