

ACTNow! (Applying Christ's Teaching NOW) follows the weekly sermon series of TPMC, and challenges us to apply and put into practice the biblical truths we hear each week. It is the recommended Bible discussion material for TPMC's Cell Groups, and leader's notes are available to all Cell Group Leaders and at the Information Counter.

The Seven Churches of Revelation: Sardis

Revelation 3:1-6

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SERMON SYNOPSIS

- The state of the city of Sardis at that time could not be a more apt parallel to the state of its church. It was a wealthy city at the crossroads of trade, even considered by some to be the first place in the ancient world which minted coins as currency. However by the time of Christ, it was one which shone with the glory of its past but inwardly was without doubt in decline. Situated on a hill some 1500 feet high with sheer cliffs, its inhabitants were complacent in its defensibility and paid the price with two successive invasions in the 500 years prior to Christ. These attacks happened at night when they were asleep.
- Similarly, the charge brought against its church by Jesus was one of having outward appearance of a thriving community of Christians who were in fact spiritually dead on the inside. So much so that Christ wastes no time by not even bringing up anything to commend them in His short address to them.
- The promise of salvation at the end of the letter is reassurance to the few who keep the faith. As a timely message to us, the modern church, we too have ways in which we abound in outward appearances of thriving spiritually, but are however spiritually dead on the inside. It is an exhortation for us to root our faith and actions in that which is alive, on the right foundations.
 - Remember – keep on remembering the goodness of God (v3)
 - Hear – hear with a mind set to obey God (v3)
 - Repent – change our mind and actions when the Holy Spirit convicts us (v3)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Has there been any time when you felt spiritually dry or even spiritually dead? How did you feel and how did you overcome that period of spiritual dryness?

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2. To the different churches in Revelation, Jesus had various charges, whether it was the Ephesians forgetting their first love, or the Thyatirans compromising on standards. What then, is the unique message of being "spiritually dead" here which was spoken to the church in Sardis? What are characteristics of being "spiritually dead" as described by the letter here and in other Scripture verses?
[Verses to help us go deeper: Isaiah 29:13-16; Matthew 15:1-9; Matthew 23:27-28]

3. Jesus describes Himself as having the seven Spirits of God, likely referencing Isaiah 11:2-3, meaning the fullness of the Holy Spirit in power. How can we draw "life" from the Holy Spirit? What is one area that you think the Spirit is prompting you to remember, hear and obey, or repent?
[Verses to help us go deeper: John 15:5; Ephesians 5:15-21; Romans 8:9-11]

PRAYER POINTERS

- Thank God for the timely reminder to guard against spiritual deadness.
- Pray for the wisdom to search our hearts and allow the Spirit to prompt us where we have gone astray, for where we may be outwardly spiritual but not inwardly pure.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you again that you can lead a Spirit-filled life.

MEMORY VERSE

"Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life." [Romans 6:4, NASB]

PRACTICAL HANDLE

This week as you go about your daily activities, each morning, pray and ask the Holy Spirit to fill you and lead you. Be conscious of the Holy Spirit's prompting and guidance. Just learn to practise the presence of God and be mindful of Him at work, school and home. Share with someone in your CG how the Spirit has led you through the week.