

Opening:

Do you still ever use an alarm clock? I don't have to much because usually my children wake me up, but if I want to run early or have an early meeting, I will set an alarm or three. When I was a McDonald's manager I had to be at work at O'dark-thirty and so I would set three alarms and one of them I actually had to get up and walk to turn off. If I was late for work they would be in the parking lot waiting to get in as I had the keys.

I bet you have other tricks, better tricks for waking up.

I have tried to time the coffee maker to go off and start making coffee when I need to get up, that helps a little.

The church at Sardis is exhorted to wake up! This is very, very interesting because the church at Sardis has a history of sleeping through bad things, very bad things. In 549 B.C. Cyrus the Persian conquered Sardis by scaling the wall. See, they thought they were safe because they lived high up in the cliffs. So, if invaders were coming, they just all went inside and they could sleep. But you would think one time would teach them a lesson, no, the same thing happened again later on. A second time, they were attacked, they slept, the invaders scaled the wall and they were conquered. Wow! How often do we think we are okay and we are not okay.

Does this ever happen spiritually? We think we are okay, but we are giving the devil a foothold (Eph. 4:27), ignoring temptation, lacking in our relationship with God.

My theme today is:

Sardis, wake up and persevere!

My application is for us to wake up, remember our salvation and persevere in the faith.

Let's read Rev. 3:1-6:

"To the angel of the church in Sardis write:

These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits[b] of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. 2 Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have found your deeds unfinished in the sight of my God.

3 Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; hold it fast, 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.

4 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. 5 The one who is victorious will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out the name of that person from the book of life, but will acknowledge that name before my Father and his angels. 6 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

- I. Wake up! Remember your salvation (Verses 2-3)
 - a. This is an application. Some of us, maybe many---- maybe all of us--- yes, all of us. We need the spiritual alarm clock. We need to wake up.
 - b. Look at this. In verse 1, Jesus holds the seven stars, this means that He holds the seven churches. In verse 1, Jesus holds the Seven Spirits. This likely means that He has the fullness of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit proceeds from Jesus, though in chapter 4, He proceeds from God, the Father.
 - c. You almost wonder if already, maybe, in these churches the Holy Spirit was beginning to take precedence over the Father and the Son. There could be an early heretical Charismatic movement.
 - d. The seven stars are the seven churches, they are held in Jesus' hands.
 - e. Let's talk more about Sardis. These notes come from Dr. Mulholland's class at Asbury Theological Seminary:
 - Sardis had been the capitol of Lydia, a very wealthy nation.
 - We are moving further East
 - The Acropolis had very steep sides
 - It was basically impervious
 - Twice in its history it was conquered
 - When the enemy came, everyone went up the citadel on the heights and closes the gates.
 - In A.D. 17, Sardis was devastated by an earthquake
 - We see John use the earthquake image throughout the letter.
 - The earthquake image was something that touches them where they live.
 - This area had a constant threat of earthquakes.
 - Rome helped them rebuild.
 - They had baths, part of the gymnasium.
 - Public baths were important, only the wealthy had plumbing and running water in the house.
 - People networked at the public baths. This is where business was conducted. This was where business happened. This is where news circulated and so did gossip.
 - Some of these public baths are still there.
 - Dr. Mulholland taught in Kazakhstan and the president of the seminary had a house across the street from a public bath and 24x7 it was busy, even though the people had running water. That was because of the news and communication there.
 - They had a Jewish synagogue and we still have remains from a third century synagogue. It could have been rebuilt from an earlier synagogue at the same site.
 - They had a temple of Artemis, even though the major temple would have been in Ephesus.
 - The imperial cult was present
 - The wife of Zeus, Hera, the Queen of the gods was represented.
 - f. Going further in verse 1: they have a reputation of being alive, but they are dead.
 - g. I know your works, but... **This is a bad church**
 - h. **You have the face of being a church, but you are dead.**
 - i. They appear alive, but they are dead
 - j. wake up!!!

- k. This was a city that twice got captured, because they were asleep
- l. If you do not wake up, I will come like a thief.
- m. You won't know at what hour.
- n. This is another allusion to their capture.
- o. How many of us like to seem fake? How many of us get frustrated when we work with people who lack integrity?
- p. How many of us like that to be said of us?
- q. I have heard that a problem with pornography is that they are not real women. It is all fake. Some of those pictures are even a composite of the best of a few women. Professionals actually adjust features and then an innocent teenage girl sees that and thinks she needs to look like that. A young man sees that and thinks that is what a woman should be. But it is fake.
- r. Sardis was fake. They are exhorted to wake up and make their inside match their outside.
- s. A few persons who have not soiled their garments.
- t. They are at the point of death
- u. There is still a small cell of life
- v. This is the first reference to clothes, to garments
- w. You could tell who a person was by the clothing they wore, the scarlet stripe, etc
- x. A person's garment is the outer manifestation of who they are.
- y. Being dressed in white is showing an inward purity, wholeness, they are worthy
- z. "Book of life" idea
- aa. In Rev. 20 at the end we will see the book of life. In the center we will see the Lamb's book of life.
- bb. Paul talks about the book of life
- cc. Dr. Mulholland takes this to say: Jesus is Wesleyan, you can get your name expunged, erased. No eternal security. Not "once saved always saved"
- dd. This is different than the books, the ledger that is kept on your good and bad deeds.
- ee. Jesus will confess the one conquering, their name before His Father and His angels
- ff. a name of a believer is also Jesus' name because our true nature is also Christ's likeness.

II. Applications

- a. Don't just look like a Christian, be a Christian.
- b. How are you? Are you real?
- c. I really can't tell you how to apply that. It is internal. Okay, so I could say:
 1. Be nice to people
 2. Have integrity
 3. Show love to someone
 4. Give up something for the rest of Lent
 5. Quit cussing
 6. Don't gossip on Facebook, or in the church hallway, or on the phone, or anywhere else
 7. Buy someone's lunch this week
 8. Install an internet filter so you don't look at pornography.

9. Tell your wife you love her
10. Kiss your kids and grandkids
11. Tell your kids that you love them
 - a. Those are all good applications, but they are all on the outside. Sardis was fine on the outside. Sardis looked like a saint.
 - b. Also, we aren't saved by works, but grace (Eph. 2:8-10).
 - c. How are you on the outside?
 - d. How are you on the inside? The inside matters most.
 - e. Turn to Psalm 51:12: *Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.*
 - f. This is a repentant Psalm. David is repenting of his sin with Bathsheba and he prays that God restores to him the joy of his salvation.
 - g. I think that is what Sardis is told as well. Jesus says remember how you were saved.
 - h. I think that is our best application. Remember. Recall. Meditate on the day, the season of your salvation.
 - i. Maybe as you do this you will think and think and realize that you have been trusting in good works for salvation and that you need to quit trusting in good works. Give your life to Jesus.
 - j. Don't only think about your salvation, think of the joy of your salvation. Ask God to renew that joy.
 - k. Application: spend 30 minutes this week thinking about your salvation and how you are saved. Some ideas to find this time:
 1. Turn the radio off in the car and think, or reflect, as you drive.
 2. Get up early and pray asking God to remind you of the joy of your salvation and then just be quiet.
 3. Stay up late and pray about this.
 4. Spend time at lunch.
 5. Simply journal about this.
 6. Meet with a friend and talk about this.
 - l. Another application is to keep going, persevere following the Lord, there is encouragement (verses 4-5).
 - i. There were a few on Sardis who were good. Jesus says that had not soiled their garments. This means they weren't impure, they weren't fake.
 - ii. Jesus says for these that overcome we are to have white garments. White garments in the Bible symbolize purity. Jesus says that he will confess our name to the Father.
 - iii. That is absolutely awesome!
 - iv. So, praise God! As you reflect, persevere in your Christian life.

- v. It may be that you are staying true to the Lord, It may be that your heart matches your actions, great, stay true. Persevere.

Close:

Alarm clock goes off.

Oh, sorry, I have to set alarms to remember things.

This alarm is reminding me to remind you to stay true to the Lord. Think, remember your salvation. Ask the Lord to encourage you with your salvation.