



ALIVE BUT DEAD

The message to the fifth church (Sardis) is “Alive but Dead”.

We live this kind of life. We are alive, but we appear like we don't exist. Our job, marriages, relationships and as a person — we are alive but dead on the inside. We live as though everything is fine with us. People who look at us may think we are having a wonderful life — family, church and the life that we live. God's message to this church is that they seem to be alive, but actually they are dead.

We may not like the job we do, the ministry or church and we don't live as God wants us to be. We all assume we are alive because we have lived in our mortal bodies but the spirit man is dead.

The story about Jim Sulkar

Jim Sulkar was a retired principal living in Canada. He was 53 years old. He lived single and had a rare physical disorder. One day in November 2002, after coming home, he went to sleep and unexpectedly died. For the next two years, nobody realized or found out that he was dead (till Aug 2004). The body was in the house for two long years. Since he did not have a family, nobody knew about it. Even all his utility payments

were linked to his savings account and so were paid automatically. Everybody thought his person was alive and living. Many a time, we also think that we are living but we are actually dead on the inside. We are living without even realizing that. God wants you to wake up,
now

Here is some information about the city of Sardis as follows. It was:

- the capital city of Lydia
- founded in 1200 BC
- situated on top of a 1500 feet plateau
- a safe city which was impenetrable by the enemies
- one of the greatest and richest cities
- a proud city
- ruled by King Croesus
- captured by King Cyrus

People in the city of Sardis thought they were safe and strong, and that they had the money and were very proud of it. King Cyrus wanted to invade the city. But the city of Sardis was built with walls which could not be breached. They were looking for ways to go up the wall. One evening a soldier, who was on guard lost his helmet, and it fell. This soldier came down through the cringes to pick the helmet.

These people understood that there were ways to go up the wall and used the same way they saw the soldier use. They went into the city, conquered it by destroying the city. The city was proud of their wealth, but it was over. Now the city suffered.



Now, the Lord has a message for this city. Even for us, the life that we lived and now many things have changed. God is telling us to be careful and watchful.

Revelation 3:1

1 – 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.

Introduction of God – the One who holds the seven spirits and seven stars. Seven denotes completion and spirits denote the Holy Spirit. And the One who has the seven angels of the church – the Almighty God. Like how He holds the seven stars, He is also holding our lives in His hand. For all the other churches, there was a commendation. But for this church, God directly goes into the caution. It is very important and useful for us as well.

God says, “I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead.” He comes with an allegation. God is speaking this prophetically to some. The church was good in all their activities – programs, worship etc. Though the church was doing all these, still it was a dead church. How many dead churches and dead believers we come across? What happened to your calling? For what did God call and what are we doing? A lot of people have failed to live and enjoy life for Christ. God is saying that it is time that we realize that. Just because we are breathing does not mean that we are alive. You are not living the life that God has given you.

God says (**Revelation 3:2**)

2 – Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have found your deeds unfinished in the sight of my God.

God wants us to wake and strengthen what remains; few things are unfinished but is about to die. He says that you are still not completely dead. Your life has not come to an end and there are things you need to accomplish. Don't give up for your deeds are not finished. There is life in your marriage, work and in your body. Strengthen what is remaining – your family, yourself, your body and your spiritual being. Do not be worried about what has been lost.

Example:

The mobile may function properly, but the battery needs to be charged. When people say that they tried to reach and were not able to reach, we say that our phone was dead. It doesn't mean that the phone is not working properly but that we had failed to charge our phone. And, we also put the phone on charge when it has only 10% or less charge. When we do that, the phone will start functioning normally again.

It goes the same with us. Probably we have 10 or 15% of charge (energy) left. Some may have a little more – 50 or 70%. It doesn't matter how much charge is left with us; if we can induce the charge again, it can still come back to 100%! If you can wake and strengthen what's remaining (little money, strength or opportunities), you can still start performing and functioning to your full potential for the Lord is about to perform great deeds and He will not leave you unfinished.

Revelation 3:3

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.

The Lord is talking about four Rs:

1. Revive
2. Remember
3. Resolve
4. Repent

Revive – strengthen yourself; revive what you have.

Remember – what you've received and heard, for we forget what God told us because we keep listening to what others say. Remind yourselves of the words that God had told about you and your family. Remember the blessings you have received. We get discouraged when we remember what people had spoken about us, but we get revived and encouraged when we remember what God had spoken.

Resolve – holdfast. Hold on to God's word, promises, faith more than holding on to all the negative news and information we hear. The church in Sardis had left the word of God and has been holding on to all the traditions, which is not from God. Hold on to things which are from God.

Repent – it's not just about praying, it is about repentance. God says that He will come like a thief. To the other churches, God cautions about the things they had allowed and about how they stood amidst persecution. This was a laidback church. It is about turning back and repenting. Either God will come like a thief or death will come so. Just be prepared. Time to be alive and in God's presence. When was the last time you were alive and enjoyed life with God? Repent and change.

Though there were people like this, there were still people who were standing up for God. **Revelation 3:4 - 6**

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.

In the midst of all this, there were still people who did not soil their clothes. These are the ones who will be dressed in white and will walk with me says the Lord and whoever wins will also be given white garments. Such kind of people existed in this dead church (Sardis).

Amidst all persecutions, though we are living a dead life, for people who do not conform to the world and live a hypocrite life, God will give them the white garments and their names will not be blotted out from the Book of Life. God will bless and lift you. God speaks about both people

who had and did not have soiled clothes. For people who had not soiled their clothes, their names will be in the Book of Life and for people who had soiled their clothes, God still wants to give them a chance. God is giving an opportunity to turn away and be spotless. You will be an overcomer.

What is dead in our life? Though we appear to be alive, we are dead on the inside. Do not judge based on the outward appearance of the person or the church. But God says you are alive yet dead and it's time for you to strengthen and wake up. Time to rise, time to be revived, to remember, to resolve and to repent.

Illustration:

A flourishing church asked an artist to draw a picture of a dying and destructive church? The artist was drawing the picture for months together putting in a lot of effort. After he had finished painting, he showed that picture to the church members during the service. The people were expecting the painting of a building with cracks, unattended church, broken walls and windows. But to their surprise, the painting had a very beautiful building —properly built structures all in place supported by pillars. People were surprised and asked him why he had painted a beautiful building when we had asked to paint a dying church. The artist asked to come and have a closer look. When they went near and saw the building, they saw empty pews, empty benches

full of cobwebs – everything was empty. Then he said, “this is a dying church.” On the outside it is beautiful but inside, it is dead.

Conclusion:

People look at us and think we are beautiful or handsome and well dressed. Everything looks good. But if a take a closer look, we find dead areas. If we are pretending to be good outside but have a lot of grey areas on the inside, it is time for us to get revived. Charge up whatever is remaining; don't allow it to die—your marriage, your family, your career, your spiritual life or your calling. Do not be worried about your burdens and concerns; strengthen the little that you have. God will strengthen you for you still have a lot of things to be completed. God is saying, “You are alive but dead; but it's time for you to be alive again.” It is time for you to revive, remember, resolve and repent. Amen.