

## **Revelation 3:1-6—Letter to Church in Sardis**

### **I. Context**

- a. V. 1—Seven spirits—*Isaiah 11:2*- Holy Spirit in fullness; no church can be alive unless Holy Spirit dwells in them
- b. Seven stars—star is messenger to church; Jesus is head of the church

### **II. Vv. 2-3—The problem and the warning**

- a. Church looked like it was okay (alive) but Jesus, who knows the heart, says it's dead
- b. A church without listening to the Spirit is dead; it may look alive with activities and good deeds
- c. First Plea: Wake up! Strengthen what remains—indicates there is something still there to start with, but something needs to be done soon before too late
- d. Second Plea: *Remember*—what you received and heard; most people/churches start out with life but often get comfortable and lose passion; vibrant faith slowly becomes going through the motions; can you remember your early response to Christ?
- e. Third Plea: Repent—make that turnaround and return to your faith roots
- f. Warning—I will come like a thief; don't wait because you don't know when Christ will return, you don't know when it will be too late

### **III. Vv. 4-6—The Positives**

- a. Some have still stayed faithful—white robes indicates a purity (sincerity)
- b. The one who is victorious will be in the book of life; c.f. *Rev. 7:9-10*
  - i. Both individual and corporate judgment here; the church at large is deeply criticized but there are faithful individuals. Salvation is individual, based on one receiving God's mercy; but churches are also judged for their faithfulness
  - ii. Being victorious does not mean being the fastest or best, it means being faithful through the 'race of life'; Jesus will acknowledge you before the Father

### **IV. What about us?**

- a. Are we about living out the Scripturally rooted and Spirit-led vision (includes prayer and stepping in faith) that God is giving us?
- b. It is easy for us to lose sight of our original calling; do we take the Great Commission seriously?
- c. Anabaptists were the earliest Evangelicals—they kept talking about Jesus, do we?
- d. Menno Simons had a deep love for the Scriptures, do we?
- e. Churches can easily forget they are about making Christ known to their communities and world become about other things—inward focused fellowship; maintaining buildings and grounds; reminiscing the good old days in a way that keeps us forward moving; Spirit-led helps us be forward moving.