

# Sardis ~ Unguarded, Unwatchful, Unready - Revelation 3:1-6

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Preacher: Pastor Jared Bromka

[ 0 : 00 ] Revelation chapter three, we have three churches left. We've done four, and we are now up to the church of Sardis. We've done Ephesus, which was duty above.

Well, guys, sorry, I'm not even, it's not a night. You know, there's multiple songs out there named Heart and Flesh. And I had the wrong one tonight. It's just one of those nights. Ephesus, duty was duty above desire.

They left their first love. Smyrna, a sweet aroma. There is nothing negative to say about Smyrna. Smyrna was the persecuted church. Pergamos, elevated for all the wrong reasons. They thought they were so tolerant that that was a good thing, that God would honor that.

And they're letting in all kinds of junk. And then Thyatira, same type of thing. You go from compromise to then where all things are permissible, where now you have Jezebel teaching in your church. And now we will do the church of Sardis.

Sardis, unguarded, unwatchful, and unready. If you read many commentators and commentaries and different things on Sardis, you'll hear there's nothing good said about Sardis.

[ 1 : 04 ] We're just where, like Smyrna, there's nothing negative said. Well, Sardis, there's nothing positive. There's no commendation. Well, I disagree. And we'll see why. If you remember, Sardis was one of the seven churches.

If you're kind of going clockwise, you go Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, and now Sardis. And then we'll do Philadelphia and Laodicea will be the next. But Sardis is right in the middle. And as you can see, it's kind of like a crossroads.

So it's a very profitable city. It became known for that. If you've heard of the King Midas, the legend of Midas, where the Midas touched, everything turned to gold, that came from here.

There's a king named Midas, but he is also, the name Midas is, he is the son of the goddess Sybil, or in Ephesus, known as Diana. Just changed the names with the same one.

And supposedly he was given the gift of turning everything to gold, but then he couldn't eat his food. So he went back to the goddess and said, I can't eat my food. And so she said, go bathe in this river, the river that flows through Sardis.

[ 2 : 07 ] And then everything that was then put into the river turned to gold. The reality is they found gold in the river. There was gold there. And that was their way of explaining it. But Sardis was built upon this pinnacle, upon this kind of almost like a land peninsula, where on three sides, and you can kind of see the old ruins down there, the wall.

On three sides, it was completely guarded by this cliff. But the cliff was made of clay, and it would erode, and it would not be constant. It would change.

And so Sardis, multiple times under two different administrations, was taken from the cliffside because they wouldn't guard it. When they would be attacked, they would just guard the one side. And I think it was here. I can't remember the dude's name. But anyway, it was when the Persians had attacked.

And I think it was Cyrus. And he said, hey, if any of my soldiers can find a way to take Sardis, I'll give you a reward. Well, one of the soldiers, he saw one of the Sardis' soldiers, he saw him drop his helmet, and it fell over the cliff.

[ 3 : 19 ] And he watched, and he went down, got his helmet, and went back up. And he said, hey, I know a way. So they, at night, took a band, went up, and they took the city. Happened a couple times. Sardis became known for someone who is just kind of just so full and apathetic that they're just kind of unwashful, unguarded, and unready, is the church of Sardis.

Timothy, in 2 Timothy, Paul would write to him and say, Preach the word.

There's a potential there for you to do that God's called you to do. They will erode. So let's pick up in chapter 3 in verse 1. And under the angel of the church in Sardis write, These things saith he that has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.

I know thy works, that thou hast a name and art dead. I'm sorry, thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead. As you can see, I can't multitask. So, Sardis, the name.

Nobody really knows what the name means. Some say it means prince of joy, that which remains, or those that are escaping. And that's all good. But the reality is it's been lost to antiquity. Nobody really knows what Sardis means.

[ 5 : 00 ] Throughout scripture, you'll see there's the Sardis stone or the sardine stone. It's not a stone shaped like a fish. It was believed at one time to have been a very valuable stone, a gem, and then it became common.

But nobody really knows what the name means. But whatever the name means, Jesus understood its true meaning. And Jesus is the one who gives true meaning to a name. Where he says, I know your works.

That you have a name. Literally a label. I know there's a label there. But you're dead underneath.

Sardis was a people that was unguarded. And they were unwatchful.

And then we get first here. You remember our description. We go through what is the description that we're given of Christ. Unto the angel of the church in Sardis. Right?

These things saith he that has the seven spirits and the seven stars. So here we have two different sets of seven that Sardis is being presented with. The picture they have of Jesus is not of a lamb slain.

[ 6 : 01 ] Not of one with the fiery eyes. Not of one with the sword coming out of his mouth. But the picture is seven spirits and seven stars. What are the seven spirits?

Well, if you remember, we've looked before back in Isaiah 11. That it's just an idiom or a way of saying, referring to the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. The seven spirits of God. And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse.

And a branch shall grow out of his roots. And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him. The spirit of wisdom and understanding. The spirit of counsel and might. The spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

Those seven spirits. The spirit of the Lord. Spirit of wisdom. Spirit of understanding. Of counsel. Of might. Of knowledge. And of the fear of the Lord. So the seven spirits that stood before the throne or the Holy Spirit.

So what is this saying to Sardis? What is Sardis, Jesus wanting Sardis to know? Well, I think Isaiah 11.3, the next verse, after 11.2.

[ 7 : 04 ] And thou shalt make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord. And he shall not judge after the sight of the eyes. Neither reprove after the hearing of the ears. And so, Jesus is saying to Sardis, hey, the one who has the seven spirits of God.

The one who has understanding and counsel and might and knowledge. I'm not judging after what I see. I'm not judging after the label that you put on. I see what's behind that. I have understanding.

The one who is the one that has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. Remember what those were at the end of Revelation chapter 1.

We're told very specifically, the mystery of the seven stars, which you saw in my right hand. And the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches. So the leaders of the church, the messengers of the church.

And the seven candlesticks or lampstands, which thou saw are the seven churches. So what is Jesus saying? Well, I think what he's saying is, this situation is never out of hand. It's in his hand.

[ 8 : 06 ] He says, these are the seven stars that I have in my hand. This situation is never out of hand. Jesus fully grasped the situation and his complete understanding. It's the seven spirits. Seven being complete.

Seven being perfect. Full up. So he has complete understanding and he has complete control.

Jesus is not looking at this situation thinking, well, it's all up for Sardis.

They're the church that has nothing good about them, said about them. Let's just get rid of them. In John chapter 10, we've been in John 10 a lot. And it's funny because just looking forward and things to come, we're going to be in John 10 for a long time.

There's just so much of what we're currently going through in scripture that refers back to this. Where Jesus said, my sheep hear my voice and I know them, he has complete knowledge, and they follow me.

And I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. The seven stars are in Jesus' hands. He has full and complete control. He has a grasp on the situation.

[ 9 : 04 ] And so as we go into Sardis here and we realize that Sardis has a name, but they're dead. Literally, this is a dead church. If you've ever been to a dead church, right, or what we would call a dead church, we're essentially saying, man, that was really boring, and it really didn't speak to me, and I don't know if the spirit is really moving there or not, or if they're just going through the motions.

It can encompass all of that. But when Jesus says your church is dead, it's probably not just that it's a personal preference that you didn't like about something, that they all sang acapella, or the one song they didn't have the words for, and then, you know, and they're in the middle of a presentation, the guy came up and switched the microphone.

That's a dead church. No, that's just a disorganized church. No, that's a church where God is at work, and so the enemy is at work, right? But if Jesus says your church is dead, man, that's not a good report card.

And unto the angel of the church of Sardis write these things, saith he that has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars, I know your works. Remember, just about every single church we've looked at, Jesus says, I know your works.

I have complete understanding of what you're doing. Now, in Sardis, they may have thought, you know, this is how you do this. This is how it goes. This is what you're supposed to do.

[ 10 : 23 ] And Jesus says, I know your works, that they're just a form of godliness, but you're denying the power thereof. I know you have a name. A good name is no guarantee of spiritual life.

It's because someone has a good name. Well, man, they are. They're such a good person. They're so helpful. They're such a blessing. They're so generous. Every time the doors are open, they're there to help. I just can't get rid of them.

Well, a good name doesn't necessarily mean spiritual life is there. Neither does activity mean vitality. Spiritual life is not produced or sustained by physical activity.

Now, we see the fruit of the spirit many times through physical activity. That's the realm we're in. But kind of how Nadi was saying that just because you can't communicate with someone doesn't mean there's not spiritual life and spiritual fellowship that can happen.

But activity doesn't mean vitality. And we do not sustain our spiritual lives through physical activity. Neither do we produce it. What does that mean? I can't bolster my spiritual life by going, ah, I just need to do more.

[ 11 : 28 ] Well, I'll be at church more. I'll do more prayer. I'll do more Bible reading. Those are all spiritually impregnated activities. If done in the spirit, then yes, spiritual life can come from them.

But if just done is an activity, they don't produce spiritual life. Psalm 46.10. Be still and know that I am God. Have a lot of activity and know I'm God.

No, be still. That we know and experience who God is, not through our activity and not through being worn out, but just being still and knowing that he's God. Remember in Luke chapter 10, towards the end of the chapter there in verse 39, Jesus has come and he's at the home of Martha and Lazarus and Mary.

And it says that Mary was sitting at Jesus' feet and Martha was encumbered about with much serving. And she came to Jesus and she said, don't you even care that I am doing all this and she's not helping at all?

And what does Jesus say? He says, hey, Martha, Martha, you are careful and troubled about many things. You got a lot of activity going. You're doing good things. But you left out the one thing that was needful.

[ 12 : 40 ] Not that she shouldn't serve. Not that she shouldn't do all that activity. But he said the one thing that is needful. So Martha, that service wasn't needed. And the things that you're so anxious over and troubled about, all those many things, that's not the needful part.

And man, that can feel like it. You know, it's like, we got to get the carpet in. We got to get the chairs out. We got to get this in. We got to put this up. It can seem like that's the needful part. But it's not. Because what is all that for?

It's for this. I mean, if this wasn't here, if we weren't here, what is all that for? Am I going to just show up and vacuum carpets? Well, I might. I'm kind of weird like that.

You know, and just like mess around here? No. The whole reason that that is worth doing is to facilitate so that we can be here. And Jesus says that one thing that is needful, Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.

In other words, all of our service and activity, if it doesn't encompass the one needful thing, being with Jesus, it all becomes nothing, right? As Jesus says in Matthew 7, verse 22, Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, we've done a lot of activity.

[13:53] We have a lot of activity that we have to our account. We have prophesied in your name. And in your name they have cast out devils. In your name I've done many wonderful works. Man, I don't, I can't say that I've, you know, specifically I've prophesied in the name of Jesus.

No, I've spoken forth revelation, you know, from God's word. But to foretell, I haven't cast out any devils. I was going to say, I felt like it a few times when my kids were little, but we won't go there. And I named on many wonderful works. These people can say all of that. And then Jesus says, I'll profess unto them what I never knew you, that one needful part.

I didn't know you. You did all of that, but there was no relationship. Be still and know that I am God. God prioritizes relationship. He prioritizes knowing him.

Depart from me, you that work, what? Iniquity. So he can look at Sardis and say what we would look at and go, man, they got everything. They have every facility, everything clicking, you know, they never have any hiccups.

[15:00] Everything's going great. It's packed out. Oh, what a great church. And Jesus looks at it and goes, yeah, I see the label. And there are some interesting labels out there for church names in the area.

He says, I see that label. That's a really cool label. But there's nothing behind it. And so now he says, be watchful and strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die.

For I have not found your works perfect before God. Now I have this as a commendation. I have this as a good thing. Be watchful and strengthen what? The things that remain.

You know what that means? That means there's a remnant. That means it's not dead yet. This is a good thing, Sardis. Strengthen what remains. It's ready to die, but it's not dead yet.

There's still some life. In Matthew chapter 12, verse 20, speaking of, quoting Isaiah, prophecy in Isaiah, speaking about Jesus, a bruised reed he will not break, and smoking flax he will not quench.

[16:03] There's still life. There was still a remnant. We would look at a bruised reed. I don't even have any reeds. But, you know, a bruised reed you'd use to, like, weave or whatever. And it's just, it's broke.

It has no integrity left. You look at a smoking flax. You know, you pull a piece of wood out of the fire that's all charred. What are you going to do with that? There's no good for that. Well, I'm going to build a table out of it.

No, you don't. Jesus says in John 15, he says, I am the true vine, and my father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that bears not fruit, he takes away.

Literally bears up. A bruised reed he won't break. A smoking flax he won't quench. He says, hey, that which is remaining, strengthen it. Be watchful.

So every branch that is not bearing fruit, he takes away. You probably heard it taught. Well, he throws it away. He does not. He bears it up. It's the same word in Matthew 4, verse 6.

[17:00] If thou be the son of God, Satan said to Jesus, throw yourself down, for it is written, he shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up. They're going to throw out Jesus?

They're going to get rid of Jesus? No, what are they going to do? They're going to lift him. They're going to carry him. Lest at any time you dash your foot against the stone. Every branch in me that doesn't bear fruit, Jesus says, well, I want it to bear more fruit.

I'm going to lift it up. I'm going to lift it out of the mud and out of the mire to a place where it can bear fruit. And every branch that bears fruit, he purges it. Well, Jesus is pruning it. Well, that doesn't make any sense.

Because if it's bearing fruit, why is he going to lop it off if it's part of the vine? That word purge is the same word in Hebrews chapter 10, verse 2. Speaking of Jesus as a sacrifice, being offered more than once?

No. For then would they not have ceased to be offered, because if the worshipers, once purged, should have had no more conscience of sin. Speaking of all the animal sacrifices, that it didn't work. [18:02] You had to continue to offer them. If it had worked, the worshipers, once purged, cut off, lopped off, no, cleansed. The worshipers, once cleansed, should have had no more conscience of sin.

But it didn't work that way. That's why Jesus had to come as a perfect sacrifice. So where Jesus says to Sardis, hey, strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die. He doesn't say, you know what, let's just get rid of that.

That's worthless. That bruised reed, that smoking flax, that branch of the vine that is down in the mud, it's not producing fruit, we're going to cut that off. Not at all. He lifts it up where it can get sunshine, and he washes it.

So he said, be watchful. The word there, watchful, means vigilant, specifically against calamity. So if you think of Sardis, that they were not watchful, they were not vigilant against calamity.

When the enemy's at their gate, like, hey, we're good. You know what, we're watching this one side, I don't need to worry about the rest. Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain.

Strengthen is to establish or make firm.

[19:10] So Jesus is saying, be vigilant against calamity and be established. Make firm. The idea is that there was the capacity and the opportunity to do both of these.

It was not too late. Peter tells us in 1 Peter 5, he says, be sober. Be vigilant. That's that word there. Watchful against calamity.

Because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion walks about seeking whom he may devour, whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

We're not unique when the enemy attacks. But the God of all grace, who has called us unto his eternal glory by Jesus Christ, after that you have suffered a while, make you perfect, established, there's that word, strengthened, established, make firm, and settle you.

To him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. So our enemy, we have to be vigilant because he's seeking about whom he may devour. How do we do that? Well, he tells us that the God of all grace, oh, let him strengthen you.

[20:21] Let him establish you that you may be complete. So Jesus says to Sardis, be watchful and strengthen the things which remain. There's a remnant.

They are ready to die. For I have not found your works perfect before God. The word found, what does that indicate? What's the implication when someone says that something's been found?

That we're looking for. Yeah. It means Jesus is seeking it. There's something that Jesus is seeking. What is he seeking? He says, I've not found your works perfect before God. So he's been seeking that.

He's seeking works that can be perfect before God, that can be complete before God, that can be whole before God. Jesus specifically is seeking a remnant in his church that will carry on firm and vigilant.

Firm and vigilance. The word perfect means to make up, to make complete, to fill up, and to carry on.

[21:22] So Jesus is saying, what I was looking for, I'm looking for, I'm looking at this church and saying, where is that part that's going to carry on firm and vigilant to the end? I don't see it. You have an opportunity, though.

It's not too late. Sardis was a church that had lost sight of the only opinion that mattered, where Jesus said, hey, you're living for a name.

You have a label. But look at how I think of you. Look what, look what Jesus is saying about this church. You are not perfect before God, before his Father.

And that's the only opinion that matters, is what does God think of us. One thing was, Sardis, the people of Sardis, they were, like I said, very wealthy, very affluent, and very lethargic.

Because of that, they got whooped on multiple times, but they thought pretty good about themselves. Like, how many times does enemy beat us down?

[22:24] And we think, yeah, I'm doing good, it's okay. It's, yeah, it's fine, it's fine, it's fine. And the Lord's like, no, it's not. But there's an opportunity to strengthen. Remember, therefore, how you have received and heard and hold fast.

So here we've had our, our condemnation and our commendation, and this is kind of an extended version or extended part of that, where he says, remember, therefore, what is the solution to this? How do you strengthen that which is about to die? Through remembrance and repentance. We saw the same thing with Ephesus in Revelation chapter 2.

Jesus said, nevertheless, I have somewhat against you because you've left your first love. Remember, therefore, from whence you are fallen and repent. Remembrance and repentance. And do again the first works.

There's a Sardis here. He says, remember, remember how you have received and heard. Remember means to call to mind. Receive means to take hold. Call to mind how it was that you took hold.

[ 23 : 31 ] Took hold of what? What did you take hold of? Lamentations chapter 3, verse 21, this I recall to mind, therefore I have hope.

It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning. Great is thy faithfulness. What are we calling to mind? We're calling, man, how we took hold of this truth.

How we took hold of eternal life. The New Testament, flip side of this Old Testament verse, would be when Paul in Galatians chapter 3 says to the Galatians, O foolish Galatians, are you so foolish having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh?

Have you suffered so many things in vain, if it be yet in vain? He therefore that ministers to you the Spirit and works miracles among you, does he do it by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?

Even as Abraham believed God and was counted to him for righteousness. Remember, therefore, how you have received and heard and hold fast. How did you receive and hear?

[ 24 : 38 ] It was by faith, just like Abraham. Abraham believed God and was counted to him for righteousness. Colossians chapter 2, as you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, how did you receive him?

So walk you in him. Rooted, established, built up in him, and established in the faith as you have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Ephesians 2, 8, for by grace you are saved through faith and that not of yourself, it is a gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. So as Jesus says here to Sardis, guys, remember how you've received and heard and then do what? Hold fast to that. And repent. Hold fast means to reserve or preserve, to keep one in the state he is in.

Jesus is saying, hey, don't slip any further. Remember, repent, and hold fast. You're slipping. Remember? Remember how you entered into this by faith?

And then, look where you're headed, repent, and don't slip any further. Hold fast. Call to mind the faith by which you received and took hold of, what?

[ 25 : 47 ] Well, the name that's above all names. Here's Sardis with a label, but they're dead. They have a name that they're alive and Jesus is saying, it's not too late, guys. Don't slip any further.

You know, repentance isn't hard. It's just difficult. That's not a hard thing to do. It's just difficult because in our minds, we realize what it's going to cost us.

It's a costly thing to turn from a direction you're going and go another way. It's going to cost something. There's a point where what you knew to be familiar and comfortable, the direction you're going, what you expected, it's all of a sudden brand new because you just took a turn.

And you don't know how that's going to play out. Don't slip any further. As Jesus says here, remember, hold fast, repent, if therefore you don't do this.

But here's the consequence now. Guys, if you don't do this, you shall not watch and I will come on you as a thief. Think of that for Sardis. That's how the city was taken multiple times.

[ 26 : 56 ] They thought they were secure and then it's like a thief in the night. Before you know it, the city's been taken. I will come on you as a thief and you shall not know what hour I will come upon you.

Where he says there, if you will not watch, our word for watch there is just simply to give attention to. Think, you're not going to give attention to this. Give attention to this. But if you don't, if you choose not to give attention to this, you know, attention is not a command.

I can't command attention. Well, you can say, well, that person commands my attention. But attention is a choice. I can't. I command you to pay attention to that. I can't. Your mind is free.

Jesus says in Matthew 6:21, for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Where you choose to put your attention, well, that's where your heart's going to follow.

Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Watch. Give attention. It's a choice. It's a choice that Sardis had to make. If you will not watch, then I will come on you as a thief.

[ 28 : 06 ] As a thief, to be suddenly and unexpectedly present. To come on you. Means that suddenly and unexpectedly, he's here. Matthew 24, Jesus says, but know this, that if the good man of the house, the owner of the house, had known what watch the thief would come, he would have watched.

He would have been awake. He would have been aware. He would have been giving attention to that. He would have watched. And he would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

If we're watchful, if we're ready, we're not surprised. Right? No sudden, unexpected arrival. Paul would tell the Thessalonians, he said, there will be a day that the thief is going to come.

For when they shall say, those that have rejected Christ, peace and safety, then sudden destruction comes upon them as travail upon a woman with child and they shall not escape. But you, brethren, you are not in darkness, but that day should overtake you as a thief.

It's not supposed to overtake us. Instead of seeing Jesus' soon arrival as gain, Sardis, instead of seeing that Jesus is coming soon, Jesus said, I'm going to come upon you unawares.

[ 29 : 22 ] I'm going to return. But instead of seeing that as a blessing, as gain, they only saw it as loss. It was a church that saw Jesus' return as an interruption instead of a culmination.

There's a large part of the church today that thinks of Jesus' return as an interruption. Interrupting their plans, interrupting their program, interrupting their church that has a name. And Jesus says, man, I'm going to come suddenly.

There's nothing we're going to do to stop that. But he's not meant to come as a thief. He's not meant to come suddenly and unexpectedly to his people. We should be ready. We should be watchful.

But it all depends on what we pay attention to. So Jesus then, giving his exhortation, kind of then gives a conclusion and says, you know, there are a few names.

There is a remnant in verse 4. There are a few names even in Sardis. Remarkably, in a church where he says it's dead, he says there are a few names. There are a few who have chosen to place their identity not in their label, but in who they associate with, with Jesus.

[ 30 : 30 ] There's a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments. James chapter 1, beginning in verse 26, he says, If any man among you seem to be religious and he doesn't bridle his tongue, but he then deceives his own heart, this man's religion is vain, pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

Uncontaminated, unstained. The word defiled means to contaminate or to stain. There's a few names that have kept themselves unstained and uncontaminated and have not defiled their garments.

We see a difference between ownership of garments here. A few, that's that same word that we've seen in Revelation before, like Revelation 2:20 where Jesus says, Notwithstanding, I have a few things against you, means not many, small, trivial.

So before where he said, Hey, this isn't a big deal. You know, he doesn't say that here by our Sardis. He doesn't say, I have a few things against you. He says, I have a big thing against you. You're dead. You don't have a name. But he says, There's a few.

There's not many. They're kind of small and they're kind of trivial. There's a few that have not defiled themselves. They may be small to the world, but they're very big to God.

[ 31 : 48 ] God notices them. God sees them. Why? Because they stand out like a sore thumb. We're going to find out they're clothed in white while everybody else's garments are spotted and stained. Remarkably, even in the dead church of Sardis, there was a few who had chosen to find their identity not in their name, but who they associated with in righteousness.

For the most part, the church in Sardis had chosen to hold on to their own garments, contaminated, stained, instead of the garments that Jesus was willing to give them.

That was a few names, even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments. And they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy. small to the world, but very big to God.

In the short term, compromise, compromising with the world, compromising for the sake of our own flesh, the sake of our own identity, it costs less in the short term.

It doesn't cost as much to compromise in the short term. But in the long term, as Jesus says here, you're dead, well, there's hell to pay. In the short term, it's much easier to compromise.

[ 32 : 59 ] Much easier just to, I'm just going to go along with that. But what we sow to the flesh, we shall love the flesh, reap corruption. Jesus says, though, that those that have not defiled themselves, those whose garments are white, will walk with him in white.

In 1 John 1, 7, we read, but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, remember, we're not supposed to be overtaken by the return of Jesus as a thief, because we're not in the dark.

So if we stay in the light, if we walk in the light, as he's in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his son, cleanses us from all sin. And they shall walk with me in white.

What? What is the reason? For they are worthy. And they didn't, what did they do? All of these works that Sardis was doing, this name, like we read in Matthew, all of these great deeds, and Jesus just said, you just didn't get dirty.

You just kept your clothes clean. That's it. Now, for some of us, that's harder than others. But it's like, you just stayed unspotted, specifically from what? You stayed unspotted, as James said, from the world, unstained from the world.

[ 34 : 06 ] In Jeremiah, the Lord is speaking to Jeremiah about those that would kind of boast in their name, boast in the things they're known for. It says, Thus saith the Lord in Jeremiah 9, 23, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his strength.

Let not the rich man glory in his riches, but let him that glories glory in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth.

For in these things I delight, saith the Lord. Those are the things that have worth. Those are the things that give weight. Jesus says, You will walk with me in white because you are worthy. Literally, having weight, having value, having something, having substance. All of the activity that Sardis had, that Jesus would be able to look at that type of person and say, Man, I never knew you. There's no substance there. You don't have any weight when it comes to the things of eternity. He that overcomes, the promise to the overcomer, well, the same shall be clothed in white raiment.

[ 35 : 11 ] Well, now we know how we're walking in white. It's not my garment. It's someone's clothing me. Somebody else is doing this. I'm receiving this. He that overcomes, the same shall be clothed in white raiment.

To overcome is to carry off the victory. Think of Sardis, how many times they did not carry off the victory. They were carried off in defeat. Jesus said, He that overcomes, he that carries off the victory.

And this verse is like the applicable verse in the Bible for this section of the churches in Revelation. For whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.

The one that carries off the victory because the victory has already been carried off. Whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world. Our faith overcomes the world because our faith is in an object, in the one who already overcame, in Jesus.

Who is he that overcomes the world but the one that believes that Jesus is the Son of God. 1 Corinthians 15, Paul is writing about the resurrection.

[ 36 : 13 ] Beginning in verse 51, he says, Behold, I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed.

For this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality. That moment when the thief returns. It's not coming as a thief for me. But when, to the world, to those that have a name and are dead, it'll seem like he was here unexpectedly.

But for us, that's what we look for in that moment in his return. So when this corruptible, this body, shall have put on incorruption and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

The one that has carried off the victory. Who's the one that overcomes? The one that has carried off the victory and they shall be clothed in white. Another must clothe us and only one can clothe in

white.

Right? Revelation chapter 4, we'll get there. We'll see the scene in heaven. We're going to see these people up there. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting clothed in white raiment.

[ 37 : 31 ] And they had on their heads crowns of gold. Well, throughout Scripture, throughout the New Testament, we find out, just as we've learned here, that it's Jesus who clothes his people in white raiment.

It's Jesus' people who receive crowns. And further evidence of that, when we look in Revelation chapter 7 further on, we're in the middle of the tribulation and this is not the church, this is speaking of those who have died, believers at the time who've come to faith in the tribulation and have been martyred.

And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? And where do they come from? And I, John, said to him, Sir, you know. He's saying, Who are these?

They're beneath the throne and they're clothed in white. He said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation and they've washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Now, we will not come out of great tribulation. We will come out before great tribulation. But we wash our robes by the same method. Through the blood of the Lamb. He will clothe us in white.

[ 38 : 33 ] And he said, And I will not blot out his name out of the book of life. But I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. To confess his name means you belong there.

He's saying, This is where you belong. It's to acknowledge openly and joyfully, to profess publicly, and to promise. So when Jesus said, I'll confess you before my Father, it's not a, well, here's Jared. No, he does it joyfully. It's publicly. He says, I want to be identified with them. I own them as mine. Hebrews 11, 16 says, But now they desire a better country that is a heavenly, wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he's prepared for them a city.

So when he confesses us before his angels and before his Father, he's saying, hey, they are to be here. In other words, we have a right to be there. But what is this book, this book of life that we could get blotted out of?

That doesn't sound very good. I don't want to get blotted. There's a scripture. There it is.

[ 39 : 41 ] But I will not blot out of his name out of the book of life. So what is the book of life? Well, in scripture, there's multiple times where we read about this book.

But there's a couple things we can observe about it already. For a name to be blotted out, it means it's already there. And it also means it can be removed. So whatever this book of life is, the name has to already be there to be blotted out.

And the name can then be removed. So it's not a permanent position you have if your name's written in the book of life. Revelation 22, after the tribulation, after the thousand-year reign, heaven and earth, old heaven and earth are done away in fire and then the dead are raised.

If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life and out of the holy city and from the things which are written in this book. It's not the verse I thought it was.

We're going to look at that one in a minute. Revelation 20. Anyway, this one says the same thing, though. This is at the end of the book where he's saying if you take anything out of this book, then God will take away your name out of the book of life.

[ 40 : 56 ] Oh, man. I thought when I was born again, my name's permanently in the book of life. I thought it got written in there. What does that mean? This is what I was talking about at the end of the millennium kingdom. John says, I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God so that this is not our, this is not the Bema seat, the reward seat where the church goes before Christ.

This is, we have ruled and reigned with him for a thousand years on the earth. This is the dead who have rejected Christ and he now raises them for judgment. 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 and the sea gave up the dead which was in that, which were in it and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them and they were judged every man according to their works.

That must be what those first books are, right? Here's your works. Jesus is going, I see you have a name but you're dead. I see that you did many wonderful works in my name but I never knew you. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire.

This is the second death and whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. Okay, well that makes sense. If your name's not in the book of life you're cast into the lake of fire but if your name's blotted out what assurance do I have that my name's never going to be taken out of there?

How do you know it doesn't get blotted out? Revelation chapter 13 And it was given unto him speaking of the Antichrist to make war with the saints and to overcome them and power was given him over all kindreds and tongues and nations and all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. [ 42 : 40 ] Oh, here's another book of life. It's not the book of life. It's the book of life of the Lamb. So there's the book of life and then there's the Lamb's book of life. Revelation 21 verse 27 And there shall in no wise enter into it the new Jerusalem anything that defiles neither whatsoever works abomination or makes a lie but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Here's another book. We know as we had just read it in John chapter 10 that Jesus gives us eternal life we'll never perish and no man shall be able to pluck us out of his hand. So the book of life cannot be only for the redeemed.

It can't be. Because once we're written in the Lamb's book of life our name's not blotted out. So you have two books. You have a book of life where all names are in it. Every name every person that would come into being their name is written in the book of life.

But there's a chance that name may be blotted out. It'll be blotted out if their name's not written in the Lamb's book of life. The names are already there and they can be removed. The Lamb's book of life only those belonging to the Lamb are in it.

And once you're in that there's no removing of that name. Because you're not going to be taken out of Jesus' hand. You can't perish. And so when our names are written in the Lamb's book of life our name is also in the book of life because it's not been blotted out.

[ 43 : 59 ] So where Jesus says here he that overcomes the same shall be clothed in white raiment and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life. No he won't. Because our names will be written in the Lamb's book of life. But I'll confess his name before my Father and before his angels.

They think man you know Jesus says he can blot out our names. Oh I don't want to be one of those people. Well don't worry about it. Get your name in the Lamb's book of life and your name will never be taken from the book of life. He that has an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

And you think in the context of Sardis here there are churches dead. So essentially he that has a living ear you can have an ear but if you're dead what can you not do with it? You can't hear.

He that has an ear let him hear. He that has a living ear. One who can hear is one who's alive. So as long as we can hear means that we're alive. And just like Sardis there's people out there that man they have a name and I don't even think they know they're dead.

At least there's people I meet out there that's like oh yeah I'm a Christian but there's no substance there's no weight there's nothing there to their life and their faith that would make you say well is your name written in the Lamb's book of life?

[ 45 : 18 ] Who's that? Those whose names have been written in the Lamb's book of life are those who have heard and believed what was written in the book of the Lamb in this life.

Right? This is the book of the Lamb in this life. We've heard it. We've believed it. And because of that we have our names written in the Lamb's book of life. Jesus will never look at you and say I know you have a name but you're dead.

He'll look at you and go I know your name. There it is in the Lamb's book of life. It's right under Billy Graham's. Alphabetical.

And he'll match that up and go oh there it is in the book of life. You know there's other books? You know there's a book that says that Jesus in Malachi says that he writes in his book whenever he sees two people talking of him.

He writes that in his book. He's got a journal. God's like oh they're talking about me again. It's written in that book. There's all kinds of books. There's not a book of the damned.

[ 46 : 19 ] You're either in life or you're not. Right? Jesus didn't come to condemn the world but the world through them might be saved. Be watchful. Be vigilant. Be ready.

And Jesus was praying in the garden. Peter and the boys fell asleep. And he went a little further and fell on his face and prayed saying oh my father if it be possible let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless not as I will but as thou will. And as he comes unto his disciples and finds them asleep and saith unto Peter what? Could you not watch with me one hour? How are we watchful? How are we vigilant? How are we ready? Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation the spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak. We're alive. Let's do the things that promote life. Let's be watchful. Let's be vigilant. Let's be ready because our adversary is roaming about as a roaring lion. You know we are a church that has a name and we're alive.

[ 47 : 24 ] I'm not just saying that because I like you guys and I like but it's what God is doing. I was thinking about it the other day that there's not one person in this church that I asked to be here that I invited here even even those that came from the previous church nobody that said would you please come come to this church I was like if you want to come come if you don't leave but it's what God's doing there's no program there's no plan and you look around and God's done pretty good but you know if we get too hung up on our label get too hung up on like the activity it's possible that our attention could our focus could shift and the Lord would have to say to us hey do you remember remember remember when you were like oh God we have nowhere to meet please remember by faith when you just did the next thing remember that repent don't slip any further so I guess that's the message to us tonight not that we are slipping but just not to slip to keep going you know I was thinking about that

Lord willing this is where he's got us right but if the pillar of cloud by night the pillar or pillar of cloud by day and the fire by night moves we'll go wherever he wants but even if this is the spot and we're set and we're comfortable and we're established man I always want to be moving forward at the vanguard of faith whatever that is whatever that step God has us to take in faith it may not be a shake it up and move kind of thing it may just be like hey pray with one another hey I want you to reach out to this demographic of people or whatever it is or just be faithful to do the same thing week after week after week you know we were praying on the way here and there is nothing outside of this that can replace this you know that as believers there's nothing that can replace fellowship nothing nothing else you can find out there in the world there's nothing else you can do on your own yes this what we do here gives helps us establish what we do on our own right that's the whole point of this to help strengthen and establish and edify our devotional life but man you can't replace this you can't replace it so praise God we're a living church

Father I do thank you so much Lord that we are a church that's alive Lord we are a church that Lord we haven't asked anybody but we've asked you many things and Lord you've answered those prayers Lord as we heard from Natty that prayers she'd asked and that you've answered Lord I think as Lord we haven't even officially ever sent anybody out but there's people who go out from our church Lord whether it's Natalie in Mexico or Derek in the Far East or when Donato goes out Lord there's people you've sent out and we want to support them Lord there's people that are going to be sent out tonight we're going to go out of this place we're going to go out into the world we want to support one another we want to be there for each other and Lord I thank you Lord that you have given us the capacity to be watchful to be vigilant and Lord to be ready I want to be ready when you return Lord I pray that the life that you put in this church by your spirit Lord that Lord you'd never have to say to us hey remember and repent don't slip any further but Lord you'd be able to look at us and say hey there's more than a few but Lord we would be a remnant church in this world but the entire body of this church

Lord would be alive and on fire for you so use this Lord to minister to one another Lord on Sundays and Wednesdays and whenever we gather to minister the life that comes from you we thank you in Jesus name Amen