

A Call to Faithfulness

When We Need a Wake-up Call

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Week 4

Revelation 3:1-6

Bible Reading Plan

[Start the Plan](#)

Click the link above to read the Bible along with your group.

1. When have you missed something important because you felt mentally checked out?

it doesn't matter how old you are, we can all mentally check out and miss what's coming. Most likely, we've all experienced this at some level, including in our spiritual life.

You can be:

- Busy but not abiding
- Active but not alive
- Present but not passionate

Bottom line: You can look vibrant on the outside and be lifeless on the inside.

And that's exactly what Jesus addresses in Revelation 3:1-6—a church that had a reputation for being alive, but in reality, was spiritually dead. Welcome to week four of our series on the churches in Revelation: “A Call to Faithfulness”.

Revelation 3:1-6 is one of the most sobering passages in all of Scripture. And it serves as a wake-up call for every believer who has drifted into spiritual lethargy. Read Revelation 3:1-6.

To understand this passage, we need to understand the city of Sardis. Sardis was once a wealthy and powerful city, the capital of the ancient kingdom of Lydia. It was famous for its gold and its luxury. In fact, some of the earliest coins in history were minted there. But Sardis had a problem—a fatal flaw.

The city was built on a high hill, surrounded by steep cliffs, which made it seem nearly impregnable. The people of Sardis believed they were secure. They felt untouchable.

2. Does this relate? Has do you think wealth and security is viewed where you live?

Though Sardis felt untouchable, twice in its history, the city was conquered because of carelessness. Enemies scaled the cliffs at night while the guards were asleep or inattentive. The city that thought it could never fall... fell. That history forms the backdrop of Jesus' message. Because just like the city, The church in Sardis had become complacent.

And that's what we see in verse 1—The Diagnosis: A dead church with a good reputation. "I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead." (Revelation 3:1, ESV)

From the outside, everything looked fine. The programs were running. The services were happening. The name was respected. But spiritually, something was missing. This is the danger of external Christianity without internal vitality. It's possible to: sing songs without worshiping, serve without loving, attend without engaging, believe without being transformed. As one author put it, "A church can be full of activity and empty of life." Leonard Ravenhill once said, "The church has many organizers, but few agonizers; many players and payers, but few prayers." That's Sardis. And if we're honest, that can be us.

3. In your church experience, when have you been involved with a lot of things that were happening, but still felt like something was missing spiritually?

We, like the church in Sardis, need to hear The Call: Wake Up! "Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die..." (Revelation 3:2a, ESV)

Jesus doesn't start with condemnation but with a command: Wake up. This is not a gentle suggestion. It's a spiritual alarm clock. There is a sense of urgency: Be constantly watchful! Why? Because something is still alive—but barely. There is still hope—but it's fading. Spiritual lethargy doesn't usually happen overnight. It happens gradually. But before long, what was once vibrant becomes routine. What was once alive becomes mechanical.

C.S. Lewis warned, “If you examined a hundred people who had lost their faith in Christianity, I wonder how many of them would turn out to have been reasoned out of it... and how many were simply drifted away.” (C.S. Lewis)

Drift is the danger that requires a wake-up call. Drift leads to this problem: Incomplete Devotion. “For I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God.” (Revelation 3:2b, ESV)

The issue wasn’t that they were doing nothing—it’s that what they were doing was incomplete. Their works lacked something: Depth, Sincerity, God-centeredness. They were going through the motions, but their hearts were not fully engaged. It’s like a student who turns in an assignment that looks good—but hasn’t actually followed the instructions. Or like someone who says, “I love you,” but never shows it. God is not impressed with half-hearted devotion. He doesn’t want fragments of our lives—He wants the whole thing.

4. Are you experiencing incomplete devotion to Jesus? What do you think is missing?

Jesus’ words go on to tell us that there is a remedy to incomplete devotion. “Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent.” (Revelation 3:3a, ESV)

Here’s Jesus’ three-part prescription--Remember, Keep, Repent:

- Remember The joy of your salvation, The freshness of your faith, The hunger you once had for God. Sometimes the path forward begins by looking back.
- Keep living out the truth. Spiritual vitality comes from obedience, not just knowledge.
- Repent and turn back. Repentance is not just feeling bad—it’s changing direction. It’s saying: “I’ve drifted—and I’m coming back.” “I’ve grown cold—and I want to be renewed.”

But with the remedy comes a warning: “If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief...” (Revelation 3:3b, ESV).

Unexpected Judgment. This is a serious warning. Jesus says if they remain asleep, His coming will be sudden and unexpected. Just like the city of Sardis was overtaken while unprepared. Spiritual lethargy leaves us vulnerable. It dulls our awareness. It numbs our sensitivity to God. It lulls us into a false sense of security. A.W. Tozer wrote, “Complacency is a deadly foe of all spiritual growth.” (A. W. Tozer)

5. What does Jesus' warning to these believers teach us about our need to take His judgment seriously?

"Yet you have still a few names in Sardis... who have not soiled their garments..." (Revelation 3:4, ESV)

Even in a dying church, there are faithful believers. There are always those who: Stay true, Stay awake, Stay devoted. God always preserves a remnant. And He sees them. He honors them. He promises that they will walk with Him in white—a symbol of purity and victory. This is a reminder, that you don't have to follow the crowd. You can be spiritually alive even in a spiritually dull environment.

So don't give up, there IS hope. The Hope: A Faithful Remnant.

And with that hope comes a promise: "The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. (Revelation 3:5, ESV)

The Promise: Security and Identity.

Notice that Jesus gives Three promises:

- White Garments—symbolizing righteousness and victory
- Name in the Book of Life—Security in salvation
- Confession Before the Father. This is deeply personal. Your faithfulness matters. Your perseverance is seen. Your name is known.

And so, Jesus extends a call: "He who has an ear, let him hear..." (Revelation 3:6, ESV). The Call to Hear: This is not just for Sardis. This is for every church. Every believer. Every season.

6. What do you hear Jesus saying to you? In what way do you need a wake-up call?

But how do you know when you need a wake-up call?

- Prayer becomes optional
- Scripture becomes dry
- Worship becomes routine
- Sin becomes tolerated

- Passion becomes memory

You're not hostile to God—you're just... indifferent. And indifference is dangerous. So, maybe we all need to take some practical steps to Wake Up:

- Be Honest. Acknowledge where you are.
- Reignite Your Time with God. Start small—but start consistently.
- Remove Distractions. What is dulling your spiritual appetite?
- Reconnect with Community. Isolation fuels lethargy.
- Serve with Purpose. Engagement brings energy.
- Ask God for Renewal. Revival begins with a humble prayer.

Our spiritual vitality is like a fire in a firepit. And if you don't keep adding wood, the fire goes out. Sometimes we can get so busy "doing" for God, expending fuel but not adding more wood, so the fire starts to go out. That's what we see Jesus calling us to. Prayer and community and worship—reigniting the fire we have for Jesus.

This is not just a warning; it's an invitation. An invitation to: Wake up, Return, Renew, Reignite.

Where are you spiritually right now? Fully alive? Drifting? Asleep? Is your faith vibrant—or just visible? Is your heart engaged—or just your habits? Today is your wake-up call. Not tomorrow. Not next week. But Now. Because The same Jesus who sees your condition is the same Jesus who offers restoration. He doesn't just expose deadness—He brings life. So, wake up!