

SEVEN LETTERS to SEVEN CHURCHES



SMALL GROUP NOTES: Sunday 3rd August – Week 5 ‘SARDIS’

Game – Dead or Alive

Why not have a bit of fun with the game – do you know which of these following famous people are alive and who is not?

<https://thenotquiz.com/dead/>

or

<https://quizpug.com/can-you-pass-this-dead-or-alive-quiz/>

Read Revelation 3.1-6

Signs of Life

I have to wonder what the church of Sardis was expecting when it came to the letter it received – but nothing could have prepared it for the letter it received.

v1 'I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead.'

In what ways could churches today be guilty of the same charge?

What makes a church truly ‘alive’?

What does a dead church look like?

You have the sense with the church of Sardis that its very life is teetering on the edge and about to die. Perhaps it wouldn't have taken long to see it finally die – but it didn't as we will go on and see.

Can you relate to this?

Have there been times in your life or the life of people you know when it felt that faith was about to die and you were just hanging on by a thread – and yet something happened to revive it?

If you can, share with each other.

We know from the writings of Bishop Melito of Sardis, some 70 years later that the church had revived and thrived. If you are interested in what he has to say, some fragments of his writing have been collated here. <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/melito.html>

It is such a great encouragement to know that this church found the way back to life – and that God longs for every church and everyone to do the same.

It seems that the church in Sardis had become complacent and lazy and let things slip. So easy to do when it feels like things are going well and you are coasting on a great reputation. They are described as wearing 'soiled clothes' – at least most of them - not even bothered to wash regularly – a metaphor for spiritually falling into slack habits. No longer the keen dynamic church they used to be.

So how do you spot signs of decay when everything looks good on the 'outside' of a church?

Keeping Going

In our own Christian lives, sometimes it feels like a battle to keep things fresh and energised – especially if you have been a Christian for a long time.

What advice and suggestions would you give to a Christian friend who asked you how they inject some life into their walk with God – when it feels tired and jaded?

What do you do to keep alive with Christ?

What is the Spirit saying?

How does this letter speak to you?

What is the Spirit saying to the church right now?