Introduction: In our series of “Dangers Facing the Church” we have spoken of false doctrine, apathy, worldliness, and others. In speaking of the “church” I have been referring to congregations and not the Universal church. Also, individuals in those specific congregations are often mentioned in our studies. This lesson deals with Revelation 3.1-6, the church at Sardis and what Jesus says to them.

**I) Danger of Dying Churches**

**A) The reality is**

1. A church may appear to be alive but yet be dead –

2. Churches can and do die –

3. Even dead churches can have spiritually alive individuals –

4. Dead churches can be resurrected –

5. Judgment is coming –

**B) Appearance may not be reality**

**1. “And to the angel of the church in Sardis write,**

**‘These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: “I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. Revelation 3:1**

2. The VIEW of MANY "professed christians” …

a. “Look at all the people …” -

b. “Look at all the ‘GOOD …” -

c. “Look at what they offer …” –

d. “Look at their prominence in the community …” –

e. “Look at their fantastic preacher …” –

**C) The church at Sardis was considered “Sound” by most**

1. Right “FORM” of doctrine

2. Right “practices” in worship

3. They agree with us on the important issues …

4. Oppose what we oppose …

5. These things are not necessarily signs of spiritual “life”!!

**II) Churches Can and Do Die**

**Revelation 3.1 “but your are dead”**

**A) The basic concept of death in the Bible is separation …**

1. Alien sinner - Ep 2:12; Col 1:21

The hypocrite - Mat 23:25-28

The apostate - Luke 15:24; Gal 5:1-4; Heb 10:26-32

The inactive, apathetic child of God / CHURCH - James 2:20,26; Rev 3:1,2,16,19

**B) Some “churches” are spiritually dead**

1. Incomplete works

2. Defiled garments

3. Not following Christ

4. Ashamed of Christ

**C) Symptoms of a dying church**

1. Worships it past

2. Is resistant to change (Cannot change the doctrine of Christ)

3. Is carnal and lazy

4. Neglects worship

5. No longer reaches out (not evangelistic in nature)

6. When Bible study doesn’t interest the members, 2 Tim 2:15; Ac 17:11,12

7. When members fail to encourage one another unto love and good works - Heb 10:24,25

8. When members allow worldly things to take precedence - Jam 4:4; 1 Jn 2:15-17

9. If we are unwilling to be involved in worship/work of the church - Eph 4:16; 1 Cor 12:12-28

**III) Causes of Spiritual Death**

**A) Ignorance, Hosea 4.6**

**B) Neglect--1 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. Hebrews 2:1**

**C) Apathy--He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad. Matthew 12:30**

**D) Compromise—Ephesians 5.11**

**E) Error, Galatians 1.6-9**

**F) Division-- But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. Matthew 12:25**

**G) Worldly - 10 for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica— 2 Timothy 4:10a**

**H) Pride- Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? 1 Corinthians 5:6**

**IV) Tactics Used by Satan**

**A) Satan wants this church & every TRUE church to DIE …**

1. Discourage us - (persecution / roadblocks / disappoint us …)

2 Deceive us - (error / false doctrine / apathy)

3. Defile us - (worldliness / sin)

4. Divide us - (strife / selfishness)

5. Destroy us - (render us useless to the Lord)

6. Satan wants to steal our goals of growth & success in the kingdom – Phili 4:13; (Satan wants our motto to be “No we can’t”)

7. Satan does not want us bearing fruit – John 15:1-8

**B)**. **Satan wants to steal our goals of growth & success in the kingdom – Phili 4:13;**

**1.** (Satan wants our motto to be “No we can’t”)

2. Satan does not want us bearing fruit – **John 15:1-8**

**V) Hope for A Dead or Dying Church**

**A) Hope for a dead or dying church**

**2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. 3 Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Revelation 3:2-3**

1. Admonition to the dead

a. Be watchful –1 Pet 5:8

b. Strengthen what remains – 1 Cor. 15:58

c. Remember – Rev. 2.5

d. Hold fast – 2 Tim 1:13

e. Repent – Acts 8:22

2. Encouragement, Rev. 3.4…

a. A few were serving the Lord. - 1 Kings 19:18; Mat 7:13,14; Jam 1:27

b. You can be righteous even when the majority is not.

c. Judgment will be personal & impartial – 2 Cor 5:10

3. The unrighteous need to identify the godly and emulate their pattern of faithfulness.

Righteous need to recognize the importance of their example and keep on keeping on - (not easy!)

Conclusion: A church is not accepted today because it has a history of past glory …

The need for us to be honest with ourselves & recognize our true standing before God

A church is only as strong as its individual members (faithful? dependable? attending? knowledgable? working? participating? serving?)

A church may appear to be alive but yet be dead –

Churches can and do die –

Even dead churches can have spiritually alive individuals –

Dead churches can be resurrected –

Judgment is coming –

May we be alive and vibrant. Rev. 3.5-6