



Sardis: The Dead Church

Week 6 | October 15th, 2023

Community Group Discussion Guide

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Hall Kids + Families Farm Day

October 21, Lancaster, SC

On Saturday, October 21, we'll host a kids & families meet-up at Hall Family Farm in Lancaster, just outside of Charlotte. Hall Family Farm is a fall Saturday dream, complete with corn maze, hayrides, pumpkin patch, petting zoo, and more. Admission is free, and we'll be covering a 'Fun Pass' for each kid to enjoy pedal cars, a jungle gym, and a corn silo.

This event is designed to allow families of children aged 0-8 an opportunity to connect with one another and have fun together.

[MORE INFO + REGISTRATION](#)

Family Vacation

November 10-12, Black Mountain, NC

Registration for this year's Family Vacation is now open! We value the chance to get away, retreat, rest, and spend time together as a church family, and we'd love for you to join us this year! On November 10-12, we are heading to the YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly in Black Mountain, NC.

Family vacation is open to all Citizens Church members, members-in-progress (have taken membership class), and children of current members. The cost of the trip is \$100/adult and \$25/child. Scholarships are available if needed, but please talk to Dan about that sooner rather than later.

The registration deadline is Wednesday, October 18th.

[MORE INFO + REGISTRATION](#)

REVIEW THE MISSION

Take some time to review who various people are building relationships with and seeking to share the gospel with.

Pray for these individuals - that God would open their eyes to the good news of the gospel.

PRAYER + SCRIPTURE

Open with a brief word of prayer: “God, we thank you for this time together. We open our hearts to how you might want to meet with us. Allow us to hear your voice and experience your work among us. Come Holy Spirit.”

1-2 minutes of silent reflection.

Read Revelation 3:1-6

“And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: ‘The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.’ ‘I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. 2 Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God. 3 Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you. 4 Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. 5 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. 6 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’

1-2 minutes of silent reflection.

Close with this short prayer: “Lord, we pray for your discernment to see our hearts rightly. We want to be a people that relies on the Holy Spirit. Help us to remember our need for you, our need for Jesus’ work in our lives, and repent from ways we go astray. Amen.”

As you reflect on Revelation 3:1-6, what is the Holy Spirit showing or teaching you?

SERMON DISCUSSION

THE DEAD CHURCH

The church in Sardis was warned about it looking alive, but in reality being dead. On the surface, Sardis looks pretty good. Good enough to have the reputation to other churches of being alive – of being spiritually vibrant and healthy, good works, good deeds – and yet they are like whitewashed tombs or a corpse with makeup.

The warning signs of their spiritual death (lack of relationship with Jesus) was:

- No evidence of the Holy Spirit in their lives
- A lack of passion and zeal for Christ
- A reliance on their good works to save them

Which of these warning signs stuck out to you most in the passage and why?

CONVICTION AND CONFIDENCE

Read Revelation 3:2-4.

In the sermon, we asked the Holy Spirit to use these warning signs of spiritual death to bring either *conviction* that we are not a Christian or *confidence* that we have been saved and washed clean by Christ. Those who have conviction of their lack of faith are called to wake up and repent. Those who have confidence they are in Christ are called to worship and celebrate Jesus.

Take some time to share with the group how you experienced either conviction or confidence on Sunday? What was/is a next step for you in light of that?

JESUS' PROMISE

Read Revelation 3:5-6.

Jesus closes this letter with a sweet reminder of His promise.

For those who have victory assured in Christ, we will be given Christ's righteousness and Jesus will plead our names to God and the angels, interceding for us in our weakness.

How does Jesus' assurance of righteousness and His eternal welcome spur you on to continue living for and with Christ in the days to come?

SERIES PRACTICES

One of our key discipleship values as a church is that of practice. Moving forward, we are going to begin emphasizing various spiritual practices during each sermon series. These practices are meant to coincide with the theme of the series, and something we invite our church to practice as a part of their spiritual formation.

PRACTICE #1 - FASTING

In its most basic form, Biblical fasting is the intentional abstaining from food for a spiritual purpose. As Christians, we intentionally face the pain of hunger and lack to direct our hearts towards God.

For resources on fasting, check out:

- www.rhythmsandformation.com
- <https://citychurchknox.com/sermons/formation-v-fasting-rethinking-our-relationship-with-food>

For this series, we are encouraging individuals to fast from all food and non-water beverages from dinner Wednesday through dinner Thursday, as a means of focusing our attention on God and asking Him to deepen our love for Him. Although there is freedom to adjust this to fit your various circumstances or season.

PRACTICE #2 - WORSHIP THROUGH SONG

The second practice we are inviting our church family to participate in is that of worship through song. Singing is a great way to help connect what we believe in our minds to what we experience in our hearts.

To that end, our worship team has put together a playlist to help guide this practice for us, that you can sing along with in your car, in your home, on a run, or anywhere else that seems appropriate.

You can find the playlist here:



Take some time now before you close discussing plans for fasting and worship during the next 8 weeks as a group.

CLOSING PRAYER

Pray over what was shared in the discussion, for your group to be united in the gospel, and for help from the Holy Spirit to be shaped to be more like Jesus as we put God's ways into practice.