



August 6-12
Revelation 3:1-6

letters to the Church

~ R E V E L A T I O N ~

Introduction

What would Jesus think if he visited First Christian Church? What is he looking for? What does Jesus want to see in a local church? Thankfully, we are not left to wonder. In the book of Revelation, the Apostle John records seven letters from Jesus to seven first-century local churches in the western part of modern-day Turkey. Jesus has a message for each church struggling with persecution and the temptation to compromise their faith. Though 2,000 years and 6,000 miles separate us from them, we still face similar challenges. As we visit these churches, we will see ourselves and our church more clearly.

Open (Get comfortable talking with each other)

- 1) When you think of someone with a reputation? Who comes to mind? What is their reputation?
- 2) What was something from Sunday's sermon that stuck with you?

Discover (Open the Bible to see how truth meets life.)

Tim DeFor has challenged us to read Revelation chapters 1-3. While reading chapters 1-3 and going through our weekly discussion questions for this series, remember the following: Revelation is . . . 1) meant to be read and heard; 2) to be understood; and 3) meant to be applied. *"Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take it to heart what is written in it, because the time is near."* Revelation 1:3

- 1) Why does Jesus refer to himself as the one who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars? Read Revelation 1:4-5, 16, 20 and 3:1. Why would this description of Jesus connect to the Church and people of Sardis?
- 2) What did Jesus see that caused Him to say this church was dead? How does a church gain a reputation of being alive, but really is dead? How are you sometimes tempted to rely on your past reputation when the present reality is a bit shaky?
- 3) What does it mean to "wake up?" How can you wake up if you find yourself on the verge of spiritual death? Read Psalm 139:23-24. What does it mean to "repent?" What role does repentance play in growth?



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Discover Continued (Open the Bible to see how truth meets life.)

- 4) Read Revelation 2:5 and 3:3. What are they to “remember?” What is the “it” they are to “keep?”

- 5) What does Jesus say about the few in verses 4 and 5? What opportunities will they participate in the future? How will others be able to join this unsoiled group? What hope or truth does this reminder cement in our minds?

Close (Take a look at the person in the mirror and decide to make a change.)

Sardis teaches us that we must beware of our success. After you ponder these questions, call a group member to discuss these questions:

- 1) Has the abundance and ease of living we enjoy in our culture led to some unhealthy attitudes about spiritual life and growth?

- 2) Do we expect spiritual maturity to be a painless and carefree process?

- 3) Is this idea of commitment and sacrifice understood as a necessary part of being a disciple, or do we come to God on our own terms?