**The First Baptist Church of Columbus**

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**Sermon Notes Outline for video posted October 25, 2020**

**T I T L E: WHEN A CHURCH’S REPUTATION FOR MINISTRY MASKS REALITY**

**T E X T: Revelation 3:1-6**

**I. WHEN A CHURCH’S REPUTATION FOR MINISTRY MASKS REALITY, ACCORDING THE LORD’S ASSESSMENT, IT MORE THAN LIKELY IS BASKING IN THE SPLENDOR OF ITS PAST.** V. 1

Such was the case in Sardis. When John wrote his letter to Sardis, it was wealthy but degenerate. Even the once great citadel was now only an ancient monument on the hilltop. There was no life or spirit there. The once great Sardians were soft, and twice they had lost their city because they were too lazy to keep watch. In that atmosphere so lacking in energy or concern, the Christian church too had lost its vitality and was a corpse instead of a living church.

A. The church at Sardis in John’s day is a classic example of a church being influenced more so by the culture of its day rather than the word of God.

**Romans 15:13**

B. The most important perspective relative to the life and/or ministry of a church is the Lord’s perspective not that of its community or membership. V. 1

C. The ministry of a church may be obvious (you have a name) to the community in which it exists but unless such ministry is infused with the Holy Spirit of God the ministry offered is more of a socially initiated activity of the church than it is a God inspired and/or Holy Spirit infused ministry. V. 3b

The church is an organism not an organization

**Revelation 3:2 ----** ‘Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; **for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God.**

**II. WHEN A CHURCH’S REPUTATION FOR MINISTRY MASKS REALITY THE CHURCH COMMUNITY AS WELL AS ITS LEADERSHIP NEEDS TO ACKNOWLEDGE AS WELL AS ACQUIESCE TO THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST AS WELL AS HIS ASSESSMENT OF THE CHURCH’S MINISTRY. V. 3:1a**

Revelation 3:1b ----... **He who has the seven Spirits of God**  ...

A. The Lord identifies Himself as the one who is sovereign and in charge and works in the church through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

There is a message here for anyone who thinks he or she is the one ultimately in charge of the church, including the pastor. There certainly is to be pastoral leadership as well as other leadership but such leadership is to be initiated and exercised in a spirit of humble submission to the will of God.

**Philippians 2:3**

B. The Lord also identifies Himself as the one who is concerned about, aware of and monitors the pastoral leadership of the church.

**Revelation 3:1**

**III. WHEN A CHURCH’S REPUTATION FOR MINISTRY MASKS REALITY IT IS TIME FOR THE CHURCH TO RESPOND POSITIVELY TO THE IMPERATIVES OF THE LORD.**

A. Remember — visit the cross regularly... remember what Christ has done for us. (Present imperative.. Continuous action..)

B. Repent — aorist imperative... one definite action — a decisive moment when a person decides to finish with the old ways...

C. Keep — (present imperative — continuous action) Don’t be what some people may call a “spasmodic Christian” one moment Christ like next moment acting like a heathen...

D. Watch — There is an old latin saying that ‘the gods walk on feet that are wrapped in wool’. Their approach is silent and unobserved, until people find themselves, without warning, facing eternity. If we walk with Christ this cannot happen.

Conclusion: