

Is There Any Possibility That I Might Be Lost?

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I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Literally, this reads: You have a name that you are alive. You have a name. But the name you have isn't accurate. That's what Jesus is saying. You have a name. You have a reputation. But what is true does not square with that reputation.

Now brethren, I want you to just feel the impact of this. These people have souls. You have a soul. Isn't it amazing how flippant and trivial people are? Isn't it amazing that when you come to people with the Word of God, and you say, "Sir, m'am, your life does not line up with the Word of God." How trivializing people are with regard to their soul. "Oh, well, I think this." "Yes, but God's Word says this." "Yeah, but I don't believe that." Isn't it amazing! I mean people will look straight in the face of God's Word, and their lives don't line up with it, and oh well, I just take another name on myself. I call myself a Christian. Yeah, you don't call me one; you say that the Bible doesn't say that I'm one, but I call myself one and I think I'm ok. And they just skip down the street. And it's like, do you not realize what you're doing here? This is your soul! Jesus came along, and He tries to convince men, do you not realize that if you once lose your soul... I mean, what would a man in hell give in exchange for his soul? Everything. Everything. Brethren, these are souls on the line. Even if you gain the whole world, what is that, compared to the value of your soul?

Jesus is threatening to come against this church at Sardis, because they're living behind a name that isn't real. And is that true of anyone here? Brethren, it is so easy for us to give ourselves names. People in this world do it all the time. They give themselves a name, and then they think that that name is going to somehow protect them. They think because they call themselves by a certain title, by a certain description, by a certain name, it therefore makes it true. And people's souls, eternal souls, hinge on this. It's like, well, that's what I think... I'm not really interested in searching the Word of God or really finding out if this is true or not. I'm going to take my chances. On judgment day, God will just understand.

I mean, brethren, do you hear people talk like that? I do! It's scary. Jesus says to this church at Sardis, "I'm going to come against you." I have a reputation of being a Christian, I go to church. That's what other people call me. The thing that matters is not what you call yourself. It's what Christ calls you! Do you measure up in His eyes to bearing that name and bearing that reputation? And if you're wrong, it's going to cost you everything.

This is really serious, folks. This is serious. Can you imagine men and women at Sardis? Or here? In this room, heading for this state of hopelessness. And they've propped up a reputation, a name. As I'm trying to think, what can I liken this to? It's almost like children playing in the sand, and taking some twigs and setting them up, and tanks are coming across the field, and you know, they've got their little twigs. And they hide behind it. And here comes a great big tank. It's like, ok, I'm going to be safe behind this. I imagine, here comes a storm. There's a storm out there on the horizon, and it is black with the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty, and

it is coming against me for my sin, and I prop up this little barricade, it's a name, and I hide behind it. Ok, I'm going to be safe behind here.

I think on Wednesday, we heard about some young lady that somebody was preaching the Gospel to, and they were talking to about hell, and she said, "well, I don't know if I believe in hell." You see what she's saying? "Well, if I just basically give myself a name, that I'm a disbeliever in hell, I'm going to be ok. Right? It doesn't matter that the Word of God says that there's a hell. I don't believe there is one." You think that's a safe place to hide? When that storm comes out, what good is her name, "I'm a disbeliever in hell" going to do for her? That storm is going to sweep that away and crush it. Many great houses are going to fall.

Do you think that little thing is going to stand up in that day? Brethren, no name will shelter you or me from the coming wrath, except the name of Jesus Christ itself. None other. Here these folks are at Sardis. They're hiding behind a reputation.

I'll say this, brethren. What mercy! You picture it. You have an enemy. His troops are coming across the field. The tanks are rolling in. The artillery is rolling in. You've got jets coming in fully armed. And here you are totally exposed in the field, you set up a few twigs and a little rotten cloth and you hide behind it. Oh, I'm going to be safe here. For the general of those ranks, who you have wronged badly, he comes across the enemy lines, and not as an enemy right at this point, but he comes up beside you, puts his arm around you as you stand behind your little tattered barricade, and he says, "Look. That barricade isn't going to stand when I come against you. Make peace with me now and come join me. And you'll be safe." What mercy! That he comes to them like that. Because he's got every right just to break forth against them. Right? But to come and even bid them, to encourage them, "Come." The name you're hiding behind will give way.

Brethren, some of you, you're holding the title "Christian." And I hope you'll wake up like He called Sardis to wake up. Because all it is is a name. The name of Christian without the reality of Christian, it's going to be blown away by the wrath of God in an instant. It will not stand. It cannot stand. The most deadly, damning delusion is not miscalculating somebody else's reputation. You understand that? I mean, I may look at you and I may have a great estimation of you. And be wrong. But that in and of itself is not the determining factor. Because you may look at me and say, "he makes way too much of me, I know my real state - it's bad." And you may flee to Christ and all is well. Or I may look at you and I may think evil of you, and I may be dead wrong. Really, things are well with you, and Christ thinks well with you, and everything is alright. I mean, miscalculations about somebody else's reputation are not necessarily the final word on the matter. But I'll tell you this, brethren, when you're wrong about yourself, you're wrong. And if you stay on that course, it's damning. It's serious. You need to wake up!

That's what He's saying here, "Wake up! Wake up!" If you're not willing to repent, if you're not willing to wake up, you should tremble. The question of the hour is this: is there any possibility... and look, we all need to ask ourselves this. I want to ask myself this. I want you to ask yourself this. Is there any possibility that you may be dead or that you may be dying? And that if you continue on your present course, you will lose your soul? I'm just asking you to consider, is there any possibility that that might be true? Is there any of us that bear the name

alive and well, but if you basically look at the path that you're on and you were to draw a line off of it and project where it goes, it misses heaven. Brethren, that's what we want to think about.

You know what Jesus says? In Matthew 7, He says that there are few that have life, but there are many who don't. And He's talking to the religious crowd. Look, He comes along and He says this, He says, "On that day (on judgment day), many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, do many mighty works in Your name?'" Do you hear what they're saying? Lord, look how alive we were! We had the name of "alive." We sought out demons, we cast them out. We prophesied, we used spiritual gifts, we didn't do just a few works in Your name, we did many, and they weren't just little works, they were mighty works. And we didn't just do them, we did them in Your name. And they're saying, "Look how alive we were!" "Look at the movement, Lord, look at the movement!" And He said, "I never knew you." "You're dead." And this is exactly the picture. All sorts of apparent motion that made it look good, so much so that these people, they're hiding behind the name, right? They're hiding behind a reputation that had been created by all this movement. But Jesus says, "You're lawless." "You're not Mine. I don't know you." "You're dead."

And the thing is, He says many, over against the few. In other words, those in this world that bear a good reputation and bear a good name most, the reality is not behind the name. Most religion in this world is false and empty. Brethren, that ought to make us sit up and say, "Wow!" Look. You don't want to have that name peeled away like these people when it's too late. I mean, they're saying, "Lord, we're alive! We're alive! We're alive!" And He says, "You're dead. Depart." You don't want to find out then. You know when you want to find out? You want to find out today. You want to be like the people at Sardis, who heard the warning, and they responded and they repented and Christ didn't come against them, and they were worthy to walk in white. That's who you want to be like. You don't want to just say, you know what? I've got my opinion, and I'm going to bank my soul on it, without any self-examination.

Brethren, don't do that. Religiously, there can be a lot of movement. But you know what? It's no more than the twitching of a corpse. That's all it is here. When Jesus says people like this are many. So here's what we have to ask. How do I know if my life is the fruit of true, real, God-breathed life, or if my life is no more than the twitching of a corpse? I mean, how can I know that? The folks at Sardis believed they were alive. I believe I'm alive. They were very much mistaken.

Am I? Brethren, let me tell you this, if you have sin that you know is against the will of God, and you can live in that state, you're in trouble. If you can live in a state where you've got something you know you need to repent of, and you're not. I don't mean you shed a casual tear, and you get concerned once in a while, but you let it exist and go on. If there is not regular repentance, where you're actually casting off in your life what God hates. If you're able to live with what God hates in your life, brethren, again, He says you will not enter heaven. You won't. It doesn't matter what name you've given yourself, or what reputation you hide behind. If you are not a Christian in private, and if you are not sold out to do God's will, you are in trouble. Don't rest in any name you've given yourself or somebody else. And I'll tell you this, There are very well meaning Christians that will come along and will call people "brother." And I think rightly so. But they'll call you, "brother." They'll call you "sister." They'll give you a name. They'll embolden that reputation. But if inside, you know these things aren't true, don't let a man's word, a man's

name, a man's perception of your reputation be any comfort to you, if inside you know you are wrongly bearing the name. Don't rest on that. Don't rest on somebody else calling you a Christian. Or calling you brother or sister, if you know that according to Christ, I'm not well.

Wake up! Don't lose your soul. You see, brethren, we like to have a good reputation. If I come clean, I'm going to have a bad reputation. Wouldn't it be better to have a bad reputation and go to heaven, than keep your good reputation and burn? Brethren, don't waste your soul on the fact that you might somehow now get a bad reputation with somebody. They might think less of you. Brethren, what really matters is what Christ thinks of you. If you take a hyper-Calvinistic road on this, and say well, I'm not going to burn bright, I'm not going to have life, I'm not going to be a raging fire again, this thing isn't going to be recovered unless God does it. You will go to hell in your hyper-Calvinism. What Christ is telling you to do is act on this. Right now. Act on it.

Think about this: if you're in the wilderness, and you had a fire, and you know your life depends on that fire being kept lit, if not you're going to die, then suddenly, you look at the fire and you come to realize, the flame is out. There's a few glowing embers in there. What are you going to do? Take a cold cup of the water of television and throw it on there? Brethren, do you see this is real life? This fire is you. It's your heart. It's us. I mean what are you going to do? Are you going to throw blankets over the top of it? The blankets of just fun and frivolity of this life. Brethren, what you're going to do is you're going to get down there and you're going to blow on those coals. You're going to find the driest kindling that you possibly can.

Brethren, I see this like blowing on it with the breath of prayer. You're going to blow on it. Put the kindling of repentance on it. If there's any sin in your life, anything between you and Christ. If there's bad things you've let into your life. I mean, brethren, this is about getting that fire back up because it's ready to go out and if it goes out you die. You say I don't know how this fits in with election. I don't know how this fits in. Don't concern yourself with that. Christ is talking to people. He's talking to real people just like you and me. And He's saying you have a responsibility, and if you are dying, brethren, ask yourself. Are there any signs that you're dying? I mean, did you know conviction in the past that you don't know today? Did you know affection and feelings for Christ that you don't feel today? When you sang the songs of Zion in the past, was there a joy and a delight that you don't feel today? Were you concerned about your soul in the past in a way that you don't feel today? Were you concerned about other's souls in a way you don't feel today? Brethren, that is a picture of spiritual decline, and if it's true, brethren, draw the line out from where you are. That which is dying will die and the end is death. You don't want that.

I mean, Christ told another church, first love, intensity, increase, if not, brethren, He removes candlesticks. He responds. If there's any kind of decline, we need to jump on this fire, we need to make sure that it comes back to a blaze. And you know the things that put the fire out. Worldliness puts the fire out. The world comes at us in full force on the computer and on the television and on movies, on the news, and on radio. Full force. Having worldly friends and acquaintances, they corrupt good morals. They're this wet water on the fire. Staying away from the Word, Oh brethren, if there's anything to kindle the fire, it's the Word. Anything to kindle faith. Brethren, faith comes by hearing, hearing by the Word of God. You look at your life, well, you know, I'm kind of cold when I read the Scriptures. Brethren, if there's any kind of disobedience, disobedience - basically sin, it separates between you and God and puts the fire

out, it quenches the Spirit, quench, quench, quench... You want to reverse everything in your life that is quenching. Because that puts the fire out.

And brethren, Jesus is serious. He's saying no activity, this is about to die. And it's amazing - isn't it amazing? I find this absolutely merciful that Jesus would say, you have had, you have received, you have heard good things. And now you're at this place. And Jesus just doesn't pull His hand back and say I gave them the truth, they didn't respond, let them be damned. Even right at the end, even before the flame, the last vestige of that fire goes out, He steps in one more time, and He says, pull back. Pull back. Stop putting the water on the fire. I still bid you come. I will still receive you. Repent. If you don't. It's going out. I'm going to come against you. But even here at the end, what a mercy! what a mercy!

Some of you have been drifting. Some of you are way out there, you're out there, and if you draw that line from where you are on the path that you've been on, it misses heaven. It does. You may not think so because you're hiding behind a name. And you're hiding behind a past reputation. And you're hiding behind these things. But I'll guarantee you, based on what we've been seeing in these letters, if you draw the line out, you miss it. And even now, before you fully reach that place, like Hebrews 6 talks about, where there's a point of no return, even before you get to the place of no return, He comes up and He puts His arm around you, and He bids you turn back. I still bid you. I would have you not perish. I still would rather see you turn. And brethren, the thing about this letter... there is no guarantee from it that these people turn back. You realize there is great possibility that it will not turn out well. You do not get an overly encouraging feeling here. This is like the last word. Turn back. You're running suicidally towards a cliff, and you're close to it even now. Pull back. Repent. Come back.