

Would People Notice?

by John Hines

One hates to say it, but a lot of people are dead long before the undertaker is ever called, even within the church. Do you remember the condemnation of the brethren in Sardis? *"I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead"* (Rev. 3:1). Not all of them were. Some were ready to die (v. 2). Some were faithful (3:4), but only a few. Of those who were dead, or dying, did they realize it? No, but the Lord did. He renders unto each according to their works, and the majority of folks in Sardis were as dead as a doornail.

It was that way in Corinth too. In speaking to them about what should really be happening as they partook of the Lord's Supper, Paul tells them, *"For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep"* (1 Cor. 11:30). The sleep is equivalent to Sardis' death, and notice it was many who were sick and many who slept. There were some there who were undefiled, but it sure wasn't many.

When brethren are like that, their death, their physical death, is usually met with a silent sigh of relief, if it is noticed at all. When we are just taking up a spot on a pew and we never truly worship the Lord or serve one another, it should not surprise us when we are not missed when we are gone. We've been gone spiritually for a long time. Now we're just gone physically too. Listen to what Paul tells the Philippians. *"If there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy..."* (2:1). Paul is looking for a spark, an ember that may ignite their souls. In many, there is none. There is no life left.

What should we do? **Examine ourselves, judge ourselves, and repent**. Only when we truly do that will zeal reignite (2 Cor. 7:10-11). Only then will anyone notice a difference. Those who are dead? They do not hear the Lord calling them to repent anyway. What do you hear? Anything? Will life be any different in the Lord's body when you pass? If not, there's a problem.

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