Message: *DANGER: Care-Less Church*

Scripture: Revelation 3:1-6

(03-03-24 Pastor Tony Hao)

Wake up! Jesus says it twice to believers in Sardis (3:2, 3:3). Most translations miss the impact of the literal meaning of the command. It should be rendered "Keep on being watchful." Or "Become a person who is watchful." The church in Sardis need to wake up as they have 'practically' died because they failed to be watchful. We must stay vigilant since we are always on the brink. How?

Beware of self-sufficiency. "I can handle life and what it brings me," is what we say. Every day, we trust in our own ability to understand, decide and act, believing that constant dependence on God is either a dream or a nightmare. This kind of dependence is not a reputation or reality we should experience.

Danger of being comfortable in the culture we live in. A disciple of Jesus is never comfortable this side of heaven. When we align ourselves too closely with political philosophies, groups, systems, lifestyles, we stop thinking and evaluating critically and spiritually. If we are too settled, we no longer strive for the Kingdom of God. And then we miss out on what that Kingdom promises.

Guard against being spiritually satisfied without real spiritual awareness. Jesus saved us, but we don't understand, or desire life with Him. Our faith is about who gets to go to heaven when they die, whether or not Jesus is there. We live like forgiveness of sin is a one-time transaction, but we don't live in constant repentance and confession. Our prayers are for shallow, tangible blessings, but not spiritual victories over the forces of darkness.

GROWING DEEPER (Reflection & Application)

1. What is the difference between reputation and reality in the church at Sardis?

2. What dangers exist for Christians who rely on a wrong image of themselves instead of nurturing a genuine spiritual life?

3. If Jesus addressed this "wake-up call" to you, what would he want you to strengthen?

4. Would Jesus need a fire alarm to wake you up? Or would a quiet call do it? Why?