

SERIES: Letters from Jesus to Eight Churches

SERMON: To Sardis: Do You Worship in a Mausoleum?

SCRIPTURE: Revelation 3:1-6

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How many of you have traveled outside the U.S.? If you ever get the opportunity to go on a tour or on one of the short-term mission trips our church sponsors, I encourage you to go. It really broadens your horizons and can have a tremendous spiritual impact. I have been privileged to do a lot of foreign travel, some of it for pleasure and some for ministry. I have been to thirty countries on five continents. What I enjoy most, beyond ministry to diverse people groups, are probably the museums and the cathedrals. The museums offer incredible insight into the cultural and social fabric of a nation, while the cathedrals say a great deal about a country's religious life.

But I have discovered an unusual thing. In most places in the world the vitality of religious faith is in inverse proportion to the size and the cost of the houses of worship. Where the number and size of cathedrals is the greatest, church attendance and church health seems to be at its lowest. On the other hand, where believers have to worship in house churches in secret, attendance is strongest and the church most vital.

A case in point is a visit I made three years ago to York Minster, a cathedral in central England. This amazing building dwarfs any church building in our country. Its huge and intricate stained glass windows, some of which date back to the 13th century, were removed during the Second World War to protect them from German bombs, and it took the craftsmen 13 years to reinstall them. They picture much of the story line of the Bible in beautiful symbolism, all laid out in a gorgeous stone building almost as big as three football fields.

Sadly at York Minster, like most of the great cathedrals throughout Europe and England, there are far more tourists than worshipers. There are seats for thousands, but an average service might find 35-50 people in attendance, mostly in their 80's. Many of these churches haven't had vibrant congregations for decades, maybe even centuries, and for the most part they are more like mausoleums than churches. In fact, there are *literally* more dead people present in the worship services than living ones, for there are hundreds of famous clerics, powerful politicians, and major donors entombed in the floor and in the basement.

Now I still love visiting these buildings because I love the architecture and the stained glass and the wood carvings in these cathedrals. But spiritually speaking these great edifices are not worth the enormous cost of maintaining them, to say nothing of the immense amount of time (250 years for York Minster) and treasure it took to erect them, *if* they do not house a family of believers that is alive and growing.

With this picture in mind we come this morning to the fifth in our series on Letters from Jesus to Eight Churches—the Church at Sardis, which I might call “The Church of the Living Dead.”

Listen to the words of Jesus to this church, as found in Revelation 3:1-6:

To the angel of the church in Sardis write:

“These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds

complete in the sight of my God. Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.

Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

Praiseworthy attributes of the Author

As we have seen each week, Jesus describes Himself in ways that have particular application to each individual church. Here He speaks of Himself as the One “who holds the seven spirits of God.” A footnote in your Bible may indicate that this could be translated “the sevenfold Spirit.” Seven is a term that implies completion, so Jesus may be referring to the fullness of the Holy Spirit, which is essential to keep a church alive.ⁱ

He also refers to Himself as holding “the seven stars.” Back in 1:20 we are clearly told, “The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches.” The church in Sardis needs to be reminded of their spiritual resources. Not only do they have the full measure of the Holy Spirit; they have guardian angels watching over each church. And those angels are held in the palm of Jesus’ hand.

As with each of the churches, Jesus knows this one very well and offers us the following profile.

Profile of the Church in Sardis

It has a reputation for being alive, but it is, in fact, dead. I can’t think of anything more tragic that could be said about a church—intended to be a light upon a hill, a hospital of hope, a fountain of life—than that it is dead and doesn’t know it. How does a church die? I suggest that a church never dies in a moment of time. Churches don’t have accidents or heart attacks or massive strokes. The death of a church is almost always a slow, gradual process.

Let me suggest some of the factors that can cause a church to die. One is doubt, the kind Satan introduced to Eve when he said, “Has God really said...?” Tragically many young would-be pastors are fed a steady diet of doubt in liberal seminaries. In fact, some seminaries should have a sign out front, warning, “Entering here can be fatal to your faith.” You see, most denominations go bad from the top down, not the bottom up. It starts with a seminary president who is more concerned about hiring Ph.D.’s from the right graduate schools than he is with hiring professors who know and love the Lord. Then academic freedom and tenure are used to keep those Ph.D.’s in the classroom even after they have abandoned the historic creeds of the Church.

Over time the graduates of those schools, impressed with the credentials and intellectual acumen

of their professors, are appointed to local parishes by liberal bishops and superintendents. These young pastors often use the same language the man in the pew has always heard but they mean something very different by the terms.ⁱⁱ They still preach the resurrection, for example, but they don't believe that Jesus literally rose from the dead. They use the term "resurrection" as symbolic for turning over a new leaf, not to describe a dead body coming alive.ⁱⁱⁱ

A second factor that can lead to the death of a church is self-sufficiency. There is usually no sense of self-sufficiency or overconfidence when a church is young and struggling. I remember those early days in St. Louis when our church plant met at the old Sanford Brown Business College starting in 1984. We wouldn't even have been able to hold a worship service if a group of men hadn't come in at 7:00am to mop the floor of the cafeteria, set up chairs, unplug the vending machines, and set up the podium and the children's S.S. classrooms. We had nothing going for us, nothing to attract people, nothing to bring them back *except* the teaching of God's Word and the love of God's people. There was no possibility of self-sufficiency.

We planted our first daughter church about three years later, even though we were still in rented facilities. About 20% of our congregation felt the call of God to establish this new church. It was a relatively easy decision to make, because they sure weren't leaving any luxury behind. The same thing happened with our second daughter church. But once we built a \$13 million sanctuary with all the amenities and conveniences anyone could want, it became much more difficult to get anyone to volunteer for a church plant, even though we had five times as many people and a budget perhaps ten times as large. People didn't want to leave a full-service church that offered so much to them and their children, to start over in a rented school. The danger of self-sufficiency became infinitely greater.

Another factor that can lead to a church's death warrant is clericalism, or more plainly, the hired-gun syndrome. Many churches today take the attitude, "If something needs to be done, hire it done." They have paid soloists, paid nursery workers, paid Sunday School teachers. I'm obviously not opposed to professional staff, but we must keep in mind that the staff are not the principal ministers of a church; they are the equippers of the ministers. The ministers are the members of the congregation. The goal of any professional pastoral team should be to make sure each person who knows Christ is both challenged and equipped to find a meaningful place to serve Him effectively and wholeheartedly.

Let me mention one other factor that can lead to the death of a church—a loss of the sense of the majesty of God. A lot of Christians think of God flippantly as their good buddy, while ignoring His awesome holiness and transcendence. The Bible tells us he is a consuming fire. Much of the music that is popular in the church today is really man-centered, not God-centered—just read the words! Likewise, a lot of what passes for preaching today is pop psychology and social palaver. Much of what we call worship is all about us, getting our needs met, "enjoying" worship, being fed. The Gospel is viewed as just another means to self-actualization. Friends, a church that goes very far down this road is suffering the first stages of *rigor mortis*, no matter how alive it may appear.

By the way, don't overlook the fact that this church doesn't appear dead. It has a reputation for being alive. People are impressed with this church, perhaps with its many great programs, its enthusiastic worship, and all it seems to be accomplishing. This church's deadness is not man's evaluation but God's. So I would conclude that not only do the great historic mainline churches and cathedrals need to pay attention to this warning; even conservative, evangelical churches that appear to be vital and growing are susceptible to the curse of the living dead.

We have a term in the English language that fits this church. We speak of "nominal Christians," nominal Catholics, nominal Baptists. The term comes from the Latin word for "name." They carry a name, but there's no substance behind it; they are that in name only. A contemporary poet has described churches like this in these words:

*Outwardly splendid as of old,
Inwardly lifeless, dead and cold.
Her force and fire all spent and gone,
Like the dead moon, she still shines on.*

It should not be too surprising to us that...

The church at Sardis is the only church not commended *at all* by Jesus. He has opened every other letter with overt praise for the church he is addressing. It is true that in all cases except Smyrna, He follows the praise with rebuke, but at least He begins by highlighting the ways in which each of the churches has excelled. But there is no praise for the church at Sardis. Toward the end He will commend those who have kept their clothes unsoiled, but they are few in number. Corporately this church is in serious trouble.

It is the only church not troubled by persecution or false teaching. Ephesus and Pergamum and Thyatira were all under tremendous attack from within by false teachers, and Smyrna was under attack from without by unbelievable persecution. But neither heresy nor persecution is mentioned in the letter to Sardis. They have no Balaamites, no Nicolaitans, no Jezebels, and neither the Jews or the Romans apparently feel the need to persecute this church. After all, why bother a church that is dead, or at least impotent? One writer puts it this way: "Content with mediocrity, lacking both the enthusiasm to entertain a heresy and the depth of conviction which provokes intolerance, it was too innocuous to be worth persecuting."^{iv} In other words, Satan has nothing to fear in a comatose church and therefore no reason to marshal his forces against it from either the inside or the outside. So, a lack of persecution may not be a blessing; it may actually be a curse.

Well, is there any hope for a dead church?

Prescription for recovery for a dead church (2,3)

Step #1: Wake up! Isn't that odd? What good does it do to tell a dead man to wake up? Apparently some church members at Sardis were sleepy rather than dead. Every time the phrase, "wake up!", is used in the NT, it conveys the notion that God's people are spiritually apathetic, not asleep from exhaustion but from laziness or apathy. In Romans 13:11 Paul writes, "The hour

has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.” In Ephesians 5:14, after challenging the believers to live as children of light and have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, the same Apostle writes, “Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you. Be careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.” The condition this church is in is blameworthy, and they must take action, beginning with waking up from their spiritual stupor.

By the way, this command to wake up may have had particular relevance to the inhabitants of Sardis. We haven’t said anything about the history and culture of Sardis yet, but the city was very wealthy (it was the home of Croesus who turned everything he touched to gold) so it could afford the best of weapons, and it was built on a hill so steep that its defenses seemed impregnable. Yet twice in its history it was captured, first by Cyrus the Persian in 549 B.C. and then by Antiochus in 218 B.C. On both occasions enemy troops scaled the precipice at night and discovered that the over-confident Sardians had set no guard. The temptation for those who consider themselves safe is always to get complacent. Apparently this church was lured into carelessness because persecution was absent.

Step #2: Strengthen what remains while there is time. This is the second part of the prescription Jesus offers to this church. This church is not hopeless. It still has a spark of life in it, though Jesus warns that what remains “is about to die.” What remains is a small group of faithful individuals. God has often worked through faithful remnants. A committed minority can sometimes recall the majority from death. Of course, if a church has abandoned the fundamentals of the faith and has become apostate, then believers should abandon it. But if the church is orthodox but dead, Christ’s desire is for the faithful remnant to strengthen what remains, through prayer, love, and faithful witness.^v

Step #3: Remember, obey, repent. “Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent.” The first two of these exhortations are present imperatives, encouraging continuing activity: keep on remembering and keep on obeying. But the third is in a tense that calls for urgent action: repent, turn around. The only hope is for a radical reorientation, a paradigm shift!

Step #4: Or else! “But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.” This is probably not a reference to the Second Coming, for that will happen at the appointed time, whether or not the church at Sardis wakes up. Rather it probably refers to a threatened visitation by Christ of discipline upon this particular church.

Promises to the vital remnant (4,5)

Thankfully, not everyone at Sardis is dead. Not everyone has become complacent and allowed his or her faith to grow cold. To the faithful, Christ offers several promises:

They will walk with Jesus, dressed in white. I like that phrase “walk with Jesus.” It

reminds me of an article I read many, many years ago by Vance Havner, entitled “The Spiritual Pedestrian.”

Walking is said to be the perfect exercise. We are so constructed physically that walking does us good all over. But we are not availing ourselves of this benefit. In a day when we spend millions on buses to haul children to school and millions more on gymnasiums so they can exercise, there ought to be a revival of plain, old-fashioned walking.

This writer is happy to be one of the vanishing tribe of pedestrians. Walking is my only un-American activity...

Recently at a summer Bible conference I discovered a wonderful walk through the woods. But I found no one using it, for walking is not enough. We have to be “doing something.”...

The scriptures begin with God walking in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:8) and they end with our glorified Lord walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks (Rev. 2:1). All the way through, the Book is geared to the spiritual pedestrian. . . The Christian life is set forth perhaps more as a walk than in any other figure. We are to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4), by faith (2 Cor. 5:7), worthy of our vocation (Eph. 4:1), circumspectly (Eph. 5:15), honestly (1 Thes. 4:12), worthy of the Lord (Col. 1:10), in light (1 John 1:7, in the truth (3 John 4), in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16, in love (Eph. 5:2). . . The faithful few in Sardis are promised that they shall walk with the Lord in white (Rev. 3:4). It seems to be the established gait throughout the Word of God. Perhaps it is best summed up in walking “as he walked” (1 John 2:6). We may run the race and even fly as eagles, but the saint is above all a pedestrian.

He closes with this brief paragraph:

The vanishing Pedestrian, whether in the flesh or in the spirit, needs to come back into his own. We do not have to stand or run, freeze or fry. The choice is not between living in a stupor or in a stew. We have only to return to the Gait of Galilee. God grant us a new race of pedestrians. Sons of Enoch, of whom it may be said at the last, “They walked with God, they pleased God, and God took them.”^{vi} I like that.

“Dressed in white” is probably a reference to purity, victory, and redemption. You will perhaps recall that when Christ was transfigured before His disciples His face shone like the sun and his clothes became as white as the light. Several times angels are said to be dressed in white (as at the tomb of Jesus and again at his ascension). The 24 elders in Revelation 4:4 are dressed in white, as are the martyrs in Revelation 6:11. When believers are justified, or declared “not guilty” by God, they are said to be “dressed in the righteousness of Christ.” What a contrast to the soiled clothes of the majority in the church at Sardis, speaking no doubt of their trust in their own good works and self-righteousness, which Isaiah calls “filthy rags”!

They will never have their names blotted out from the Book of Life. This book, sometimes called “The Lamb’s Book of Life” (Rev. 21:27), records the names of all who are saved. Listen to this description in Malachi 3:16-18 reads:

Then those who feared the LORD talked with each other, and the LORD listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who

feared the LORD and honored his name. "They will be mine," says the LORD Almighty, "in the day when I make up my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as in compassion a man spares his son who serves him. And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not.

In a very interesting reference in Philippians 4:3, where Paul is addressing the conflict between two women in the church at Philippi, Euodia and Synteché, the Apostle writes, "Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and *the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.*" We have no record of the names of these fellow workers. They were apparently plain, garden-variety believers—people who did not make a mark in the history books, people who lived their Christian lives and served faithfully in what may have seemed small and relatively unimportant ways. But these unknown saints are known to God! And so are you, if you have invited Jesus into your heart and life and have entrusted your eternal destiny to Him.^{vii}

But one important thing for us to realize is that the Book of Life remains unpublished; i.e. God has not divulged the names to us. So it ill behooves us to be judgmental, apathetic, or presumptuous. There are names in The Book that will surprise us, so we must be careful about being judgmental. There are names that we expect to find there but they'll be missing, so we must not be apathetic about sharing our faith. And there are undoubtedly people here this morning who think their names are there, but they aren't, so we must not be presumptuous. How do I know? Jesus says so. Matthew 7:21-23 quotes Him:

"Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day (the Judgment Day), 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Your name is not here. Away from me, you evildoers!'"

We can have a reputation for being spiritually alive and still not be listed in God's Book of Life. Our name can be on a church register without being on God's register.

Conclusion: So, now that you've learned about the Church of the Living Dead you're perhaps tempted to say to yourself: That's interesting—both sad and curious—but really, Pastor, what does this have to do with me today? How is it relevant to us here at First Free? So what if Jesus gave some long dead saints in an ancient city with a funny sounding name a warning to "Wake up or else!"? How does this apply to our church? We certainly aren't worshiping in a mausoleum, are we?

Well, permit me to suggest some ways this ancient letter might impact us today, by asking a few questions:

Could the seeds of any of the mortality factors we pointed out earlier (doubt, self-sufficiency, clericalism, loss of the majesty and awe of God) possibly be sown here at First Free? Is it possible we think we are more alive than we really are? Ron Ritchie once wrote a

Gospel tract entitled, “Just Because You’re Breathing Doesn’t Mean You’re Living!” I like that.

Have we become spiritually complacent?

Have we lost the camaraderie and pioneering spirit we had back in the old days when we met in the little white church at 10th and Oliver, or when we stuffed ourselves into three services in the chapel?

Have we gone soft on the culture?

Does it bother us if our neighbors or fellow workers are lost for eternity?

Would God say we are guilty of form without prayer, reputation without reality, outward appearance without inward integrity, show without life?

Friends, if we think we have arrived just because we worship in a state-of-the-art facility; if we think we can relax just because we have a wonderful choir and fine programs for our kids; if we think we have it made in the shade because we have 50 people going on short-term missions this summer and give 25% of our offerings to missions; then we are sadly mistaken. Jesus wants to give us all a wake-up call this morning. He is telling us “Don’t start believing your own press clippings and get cocky. Wake up and work on strengthening what you’ve got.”

What will be our legacy 50 years or 500 years from now, should the Lord tarry? What will visitors to Wichita find on N. Woodlawn? Will they find a dead church that has long since passed its glory years, with its hopes and dreams buried? Will they find a mausoleum like York Minster? Or will they find a living, breathing, healthy community of believers who are still passionately spreading the flame of the Gospel throughout our world?

i. In Revelation 4:5, however, the seven spirits are identified as blazing lamps before the throne of God. These may be the same lampstands John identifies in 1:20 as representing the seven churches of Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey). If we put these two notions together, Jesus seems to be saying that if the church is to continue as a light to the world, it will only be by the power of the Spirit.

ii. Alvin Plantinga, a leading Christian philosopher, discusses this disconnect between words and doctrine in his book, *Warranted Christian Belief*, 42: “The idea, so far as I can grasp it, seems to be this. Perhaps there is no such person as theists have traditionally believed in. Nevertheless, it is a good idea to continue to use the term 'God' and, in fact, to continue to utter many of the very same words and phrases and sentences as do those who believe in God; done properly, this will promote human flourishing. How, exactly? Perhaps as follows. We realize, first, that there is probably no such person as God. We are then free to select a concept/image 'God' and associate with it certain properties—existence and transcendence, perhaps—and use that symbol to symbolize such things as that the world is hospitable, to at least some degree, to distinctively human aspirations, goals, needs and desires. We are to say such things as 'God is real', meaning that in fact there are forces in the world that contribute to human flourishing. (We should add, I suppose, that the devil is also real, thereby symbolizing that there are forces working *against*

human flourishing.) We are to say 'God is independent of us,' meaning thereby that a community or person needs a focus of interest outside itself to flourish. (Perhaps we should add that 'We are justified by the suffering and death of Jesus Christ,' thereby symbolizing the fact that we do not always feel guilty, or 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself,' thereby meaning that things are now more propitious for human flourishing than they have been at some times in the past.) And saying these things will itself promote human flourishing.

“Can we take any of this seriously? This is not a matter of pouring new wine into old wineskins: what we have here is nothing like the rich, powerful, fragrant wine of the great Christian truths; what we have is something wholly drab, trivial, and insipid. It is not even a matter of throwing out the baby with the bathwater; it is, instead, throwing out the baby and keeping the tepid bathwater, at best a bland unappetizing potion that is neither hot nor cold and at worst a nauseating brew, fit for neither man nor beast. Furthermore, this rehashing of secularity under the guise of 'reconstructing' Christianity encourages dishonesty and hypocrisy; it results in a sort of private code whereby one utters the same phrases as those who accept Christian belief but means something wholly indifferent by them. You thereby appear to concur with those who accept Christian belief; in fact, you wholly reject what they believe. You can thereby patronize the person in the pew (who has not reached your level of enlightenment) but without paying the cost of unduly disturbing her. The fact is such double-talk is at best confusing and deceptive, contributing only to misunderstanding, dishonesty, and hypocrisy. Wouldn't it be vastly more honest to follow the lead of, for example, Bertrand Russell, A. J. Ayer, Daniel Dennett, Richard Dawkins, or even Madalyn Murray O'Hair, declaring forthrightly that there is no God and that Christianity is an enormous mistake?”

iii. I am not questioning that there is a place for legitimate doubt. Some people should probably doubt more than they do, because they tend to be gullible and are easily led astray. Others could use a little doubt to balance their own arrogance and dogmatism. I'll never forget a businessman in Wichita who told me, “I may be wrong, but I'm never in doubt.” At least he was honest. Some of you will remember that I preached a sermon entitled “In Celebration of Doubt” on Easter Sunday in 2005! But the doubt that questions a clear teaching of God's Word can lead to the death of a church.

iv. Leon Morris, *The Revelation of St. John*, 76.

v. There is an explanatory phrase here in verse 2 that offers some insight into what is meant by strengthening what remains: “for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God.” What are incomplete deeds? Could they be good deeds done for the wrong reasons? Giving for applause and recognition, serving out of guilt or obligation, loving in order to be loved—these are all incomplete deeds.

vi. Vance Havner, *The Sunday School Times*, December 15, 1957.

vii. Can names be erased from God's Book? This passage certainly does not say that, but some feel it implies it. If the “overcomers” will never have their name erased, doesn't that mean that those who are *not* overcomers *will* have their name blotted out? In Exodus 32, with God ready to

destroy Israel because of the Golden Calf, Moses interceded for them: “But now, please forgive their sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written.” One might conclude that just because Moses makes such a request doesn’t necessarily mean it was possible for God to blot him out, but then the Lord answers Moses, “No, whoever has sinned against me I will blot out of my book” (Exodus 32:32-33). Consider also the lament of David in Ps 69:4, 21, 28:

“Those who hate me without reason outnumber the hairs of my head; many are my enemies without cause, those who seek to destroy me . . . They put gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst . . . May they be blotted out of the book of life and not be listed with the righteous.”

Some explain these passages by suggesting that everyone’s name is entered into the Book of Life at conception, and then God erases those who turn out to be wicked or who reject His Son. The problem with that view is it seems to assume everyone is saved until they disbelieve, whereas the great theological passages of the Bible present the opposite view—people are lost until they believe. Another view would be that names are entered when profession of faith is made, but if the profession turns out not to be genuine, the names are erased. But that seems to imply that God has to wait and see, whereas in His omniscience surely He knows those who are really His.

Still another view sees these references to “blotting out” as the language of appearance. *From the human view point*, some who seemed to be believers will turn out to be lost. I would personally incline toward this last option.

But the most important truth to grasp here in the letter to the church at Sardis is this: the overcomer has *nothing* to worry about, because Christ promises He will never (strong double negative), ever blot out his name; rather He will “acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels.”

Can *anyone* know for sure if their name is in The Book?” I believe so. I think one can have assurance without presumption. God has provided His promise of salvation, and then in addition He has given the witness of the Holy Spirit to the heart of the true believer to confirm his or her status as a child of God. The promise of God is found in John 3:

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him (3:16-17).

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him (3:36).

The witness of the Holy Spirit is also mentioned in Romans 8:16:

(Romans 8:16) "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children."