

Sunday theme – **Wake up!**

Read Revelation 3: 1-6

1. I am confident that our church, St James, enjoys a good reputation amongst the Christians of all denominations across the town. It is viewed as a welcoming, active, lively worshiping church, resourcing and involved in many community projects. The challenge of this reading is that the church in Sardis appears to have thought of itself similarly! And was found wanting. So, does St James, either corporately or individual members of the body, also need a 'wake up' call?

1a. Let us consider first, was my description of how St James is perceived by other Christians reasonable and justified?

1b. What things or activities would you say St James is particularly good at?

1c. Having (hopefully) identified many good points, is there a possibility that verse 2 could or should be applied to these points?

1d. Can you describe or are you aware of any process used by the church to ensure these 'good points' are reviewed and kept in 'good working order'?

2. Verse 2 'I have found your deeds unfinished'. In Tom Wright's commentary on this verse he writes 'That may be a tactful way of saying that their performance of the gospel, their Christian way of life, leaves a lot to be desired. Christian faith is all or nothing; either Jesus really is the Lord, rightly asking for our absolute allegiance, or he is a sham and should be rejected outright. It simply won't do to bumble on, looking busy but achieving little or nothing. Reputation isn't enough'.

2a. Those are very challenging words! Can we at St James safely say that this is something which does not apply to us?

2b. Of the many areas and parts of worship and service which form the whole of St James, are you able to identify which parts are most challenged by Tom Wright's observations?

3. Verse 3 'Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; hold it fast, and repent' (*the belief and trust in the Gospel, the indwelling of the Spirit, the blessings*).

3a. God's goodness and generosity to us is beyond measure. How do you keep this at the forefront of your mind? Do you have special ways of doing this that you could share with your group?

3b. Do you understand saying sorry to be different from 'repenting'? How is it different? Is the act of repentance a one-off act (perhaps associated with the initial act of commitment, or baptism) or should repentance be the regular daily act of a Christian?

Read Ephesians 5: 8 – 20

4. A major passage with lots to draw on; but keeping to our theme, notice in verse 8 'but you are light in the Lord'. John Stott writes about this 'Notice that he (Paul) does not say they used to be *in* darkness,

but now were *in* the light. But what Paul writes here is more striking still; they themselves were actually now 'light'. Their lives and not just their environment had been changed from darkness to light'.

4a. What has brought about this radical transformation? (see John 8: 12)

4b. Having become 'light in the Lord', what behaviour is required of us?

4c. How often should we 'take stock' and review our performance as 'light in the lord'?

(Bible used = NIV 2011 translation)

St James Church, Taunton – Roger Fenton – 2018