

DEAR CHURCH

Smyrna: Wealth in Poverty
Revelation 2:8-11
October 22, 2023

Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. - Revelation 2:10

I. WORLDLY POVERTY, SPIRITUAL WEALTH

- One can be physically poor and remain spiritually rich. The opposite is true as well (Luke 9:25; Phil. 3:7, 2 Cor. 6:10; 1 Tim. 6:17-19; James 5:1-6).
- Jesus, who is First and Last, who died but is now alive, comforts a church who will soon lose friends to death (v. 10).
- The church of Smyrna was friendless in the world but rich in the love of God (Psalm 27:1-3; 73:25-26; 2 Cor. 8:9).

II. THE SLANDERERS

- The church in Smyrna was attacked on two fronts: by the Jews and by the devil (vs. 9-10).
- The Jews in Smyrna were particularly hostile to Christians. They worshipped in a synagogue, but not one ruled by God (Vs. 9).
- Those who oppose Christ, whether Jew or Gentile, are ultimately under the control of Satan himself (John 8:44; 2 Cor. 4:4).

III. GODLY SUFFERING

- We should attempt to live quiet, peaceful lives, but that may not be possible as followers of Christ (John 15:18-19, 16:33; Rom. 12:18; 1 Cor. 7:15; 1 Tim. 2:2; Heb. 12:14).
- The church in Smyrna will face persecution, and so shall we if we remain faithful to Christ (Matt. 24:9; John 15:20; 2 Tim. 3:12).
- Jesus does not promise to spare the church persecution, only to offer the “crown of life” to those who overcome (v. 10).
- Trials and suffering will come in life. God does not promise to spare us, only to uphold us and ultimately save us (Acts 14:22; 1 Peter 1:6-9, 3:14-17; Rev. 2:11).

KNOW: God calls us to faithfulness, even when he is about to test us. Peace and rest are promises for heaven, not necessarily for earth. Here we have work to do that may bring about painful trials, including poverty, injustice, and suffering.

DO: Know that trials will come our way. Prepare yourself now to be faithful through them.

Suggested Reading:

Voice of the Martyrs - www.persecution.com

Foxes Book of Martyrs by John Foxe (Available in the LifePoint Library)

For Children:

Courageous Book Series by Voice of the Martyrs (Available in the LifePoint Library)

Questions/Discovery Points for Life Groups/Families

Please Read Revelation 2:8-11

1. How does it make you feel to know that God will at times test your faith?
2. The Christians in Smyrna were impoverished, slandered, and persecuted. Is it “fair” that God would allow them to be tested so harshly?
3. Why was it important for the believers in Smyrna to know that Jesus “died and came to life again?”
4. The thought of persecution can be frightening. How prepared are you should God deem it wise to send it your way?
5. Why, do you think, are we admonished so often in Scripture to “fear not” and “do not fear” (Is. 8:12; 35:4; 41:13; Haggai 2:5; 1 Peter 3:14; Rev. 2:10)? Why is fear our enemy?
6. Are we called to faithfulness even in the face of death?
7. What application is there for your own life in this text?