

REVELATION

A Message to God's Church

Week 4: Revelation 2:8 – 11

Patricia St. John, who has been described as an ordinary woman with an extraordinary faith, poured out her life ministering to people in the neediest places on our planet. She was in Sudan when war refugees flooded that country. They had suffered terribly and had lost everything, yet those among them who were Christians still gave thanks to God.

Patricia said that she stood one night in a crowded little Sudanese church listening to those uprooted believers singing joyfully. Suddenly a life-changing insight burned its way into her mind. "We would have changed their circumstances," she said, "but we would not have changed them." She realized that God "does not always lift people out of the situation. He Himself comes into the situation. . . . He does not pluck them out of the darkness. He becomes the light in the darkness."

Does Patricia's insight apply to your life? What if, despite your fervent prayer, God doesn't see fit to deliver you from terrible circumstances? God's Word tells us that believers often suffer ([Heb. 11:35-38](#)). What then?

God promises to stand by you. He'll strengthen you and give you the grace to rejoice—even in the face of suffering and loss. That's real triumph in tragedy. ([Our Daily Bread - Triumph In Tragedy](#))

1. Read through Revelation 2:8 – 11 aloud together as a group. In your initial reading, what pops out at you? Discuss. Why is this significant to you?
2. Why would Jesus' reminder in verse 8 that he "died and came to life" be so meaningful to them? In your life circumstances, how can/should this be an encouragement to you?

Jesus says, "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. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life." Revelation 2:10

Did you catch the purpose of their suffering? Their suffering was not meaningless or senseless suffering. Their suffering had a purpose, to test them. Jesus was using their suffering to test them to see if they truly belonged to him. Those who persevere to the end will be given the crown of life.

3. Have you ever been persecuted because you are a Christian? Tell about that circumstance.
4. Do you view your suffering, your trials, and your afflictions as purposeful whether it is physical, financial, emotional, or spiritual?

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New Testament authors who used the concept of a “crown” to illustrate spiritual rewards. Read through the different references to crowns.

Title	Reason	Reference
An Imperishable Crown	For leading a disciplined life	1 Corinthians 9:25
A Crown of Rejoicing	For evangelism and discipleship	1 Thessalonians 2:19
A Crown of Righteousness	For loving the Lord's appearing	2 Timothy 4:8
A Crown of Life	For enduring trials	James 1:12; Revelation 2:10
A Crown of Glory	For shepherding God's flock faithfully	1 Peter 5:4

5. Is the “*crown of life*” salvation or a reward? How does James 1:12 help to interpret this phrase?
6. Are you willing to be “*faithful unto death*?” Would others from Missio Dei Church join you in being faithful until death?
7. How can we as a church help each other to remain faithful? It is not with nice sounding phrases like: “it’s not so bad,” or “it will eventually end,” or “use this as an opportunity to develop yourself,” but by reminding each other of the person and work of Christ. We like Smyrna need repeated reminders of the risen Christ.

Again, how can we as a church help each other to remain faithful when we go through suffering?