



FOR THE SERMON PREACHED ON: Sunday, November 7, 2021

TITLE: A Letter to a Suffering Church

PASSAGE: Revelation 2:8-11

SERIES: The Book of Revelation: Worthy is the Lamb

Remember the facts before the fight (Revelation 2:8-9)

1. What is the significance of Jesus identifying himself as *the first and last, who died and came to life*? Why should that identification bring the suffering church comfort? How does it bring you comfort?
2. Make a list of everything Christ knows about the struggles of the church in Smyrna (v9-10a).
3. Despite the noted struggles noted above, Christ declares the church as what in verse 9? Explain how Christ's declaration can be true amidst all the church's struggles.
4. Consider your current suffering and trials. What can you conclude about your struggles and Christ's knowledge of them? How does that impact the way you view your struggles?
5. The apostle Paul writes of suffering. Look up Romans 8:28. What promise is made? How does Romans 8:16-17 provide context for verse 28? What unbelievable claim does Paul make in Romans 8:18?

Remember the plan during the pain (Revelation 2:10-11)

6. Why are the believers told not to fear the suffering to come (v10-11)?
7. The believer's suffering will last for ten days (v10). Whether that is literal or figurative is debated, but either way, it indicates that the suffering faced by the believers in Smyrna has an expiry date. Does this truth transfer to the modern-day suffering of believers? Support your position with Scripture.
8. What reward awaits those who are faithful unto death (v10b)? Look up James 1:12, 2 Tim 4:8, and 1 Peter 5:4. What do you learn about the crown of life?
9. Look up Romans 8:18 and 2 Corinthians 4:17. To what does Paul compare present suffering, and what is the purpose of our suffering?
10. What hope does Christ leave the believers with in Revelation 2:11? How does that provide you with hope?

(See page 2 for PRAYER POINTS.)

As we continue in our series through the letters to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3, let's pray together through these passages. Let's place ourselves humbly before the Lord and trust him to teach Mission City Bible Church what we need to know and do as a result of our time in the word and in prayer. Use these prayer starters, as needed, and move from one section to the next, as appropriate.

THE PRAISEWORTHY QUALITIES OF JESUS:

- He is the first and the last (v8)
- He died and came to life (v8)
- He knows our tribulation, poverty, and slander (v9)
- He is the Lord of eternal riches (v9)
- He knows what we're about to suffer (v10)
- He tests us to refine/purify us (v10)
- He has the power to bring suffering to an end (v10)
- He is victorious over death and gives us the crown of life (v10)
- He speaks to his churches through his Spirit (v11)
- He empowers us to conquer (v11)
- He delivers us from eternal death (v11)

REVERENCE:

- Lord, we worship you because . . .
- Jesus, I praise you because you refined me when . . .
- Lord, thank you that you were with me through . . .

RESPONSE:

- Lord, I confess that I've been worried about . . .
- Lord, I admit that I haven't fully trusted you with . . .
- Jesus, I confess that I sometimes have difficulty believing you are . . .

REQUEST:

- Lord, help us as a church to suffer well when the time comes
- Lord, show us the areas of our lives where we need to take a stand for you
- Lord, strengthen me to trust that you're testing is for my good when . . .
- Lord, please bring an end to the suffering of . . . (pray for the name or circumstance)
- Lord, help our church remember that you are faithful even when . . .

READINESS:

- Jesus, when we suffer help us to trust you for . . .
- Lord, help us to believe we are eternally rich even when . . .
- Lord, when we feel crushed by the suffering, help us remember that you are . . .