

Study 3: The Suffering Church Revelation 2:8-11

RECAP SESSION 2: Revelation 2:1-8

Introduction: The passage begins with an introduction to the message. It is a letter dictated by Jesus to John, who is instructed to write to the angel (likely the messenger or leader) of the church in Ephesus.

Commendation for Hard Work and Perseverance (Revelation 2:2-3): Jesus commends the Ephesian church for their hard work, labour, and perseverance. They have endured and remained steadfast in the face of challenges and false teachings.

Concern for Lost Love (Revelation 2:4): Despite their commendable qualities, Jesus expresses concern about the church's lack of love. They have forsaken their initial love for God and one another.

Call to Repentance (Revelation 2:5): Jesus urges the Ephesians to remember their first love and to repent. They are called to return to their initial devotion and passion for God.

Warning and Consequences (Revelation 2:5): If the church does not repent and return to its first love, Jesus warns that he will remove their lampstand. In biblical symbolism, the lampstand represents the presence and witness of the church.

Praise for Hating the Deeds of the Nicolaitans (Revelation 2:6): Jesus commends the Ephesian church for hating the practices of the Nicolaitans, a group promoting false teachings and immorality.

Closing Encouragement (Revelation 2:7-8): The passage concludes with a promise to the one who conquers (overcomes) and remains faithful. There is a mention of the tree of life in the paradise of God, suggesting a reward for those who persevere.

The Church at Smyrna was under persecution for their faith, as Jesus speaks to these men and women, he reminds them that he is greater than any suffering – greater even than death.

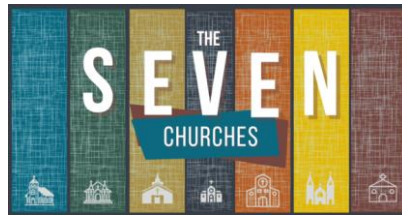
Read: Revelation 2:8-11

Discussion Questions:

- 1.) What are the descriptions Jesus gives himself (v.8), and why would these be an encouragement to a suffering church?

- 2.) What does Jesus know about the Christians at Smyrna (v.9)?

- 3.) Do you find it comforting or disturbing to realise that Jesus knows about you and the circumstances of your life so completely? Explain-



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- 4.) Even though the church at Smyrna was marked by poverty, Jesus declares them to be rich (v.9). How would you explain that apparent contradiction?

How do you measure your economic and financial standing?

- 5.) The Jewish people were exempt from offering worship to the Roman emperor and, as long as Christians were under the Jewish umbrella, they were also exempt. Now, however, some of the Jews were denouncing Christian to the Roman authorities which resulted in the persecution of Christians. Those who work against Jesus are working in harmony with Jesus' enemy, Satan, even if they don't directly realise it. Why does Jesus say that the Jews who slander Christians "say they are Jews and are not" (v9)?

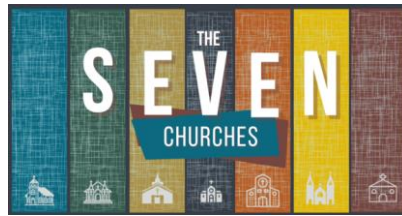
- 6.) Who does Jesus identify as the true enemy in persecution, and how does God use that suffering in a believer's life (v.10)?

- 7.) How does it benefit the Christian to say, "You will suffer persecution for ten days"?

- 8.) Jesus and at startling command: "be faithful, even to the point of death." Why does Jesus alone have the authority to give that command to his followers?

- 9.) What does Jesus promise to those who are faithful until death?

Is that reward worth death to you? Why or why not?



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RESPOND: Pray for greater courage as a Christian- not to attacked or correct people you disagree with, but to live faithfully for Jesus.

NOW OR LATER: the Bible talks about two deaths. The first death is physical- the separation of the body under spirit. The second death is the eternal separation of a person from God. Read the following passages and identify which type of death the passage is talking about and what can you learn about each kind of death.

Luke 7:11 – 15

Luke 16: 19-26

James 2:26

Revelation 20:11-15

What does Jesus mean when he promises the suffering church that all who are fearful to him “will not be hurt at all by the second death” (Revelation 2:11) - and why is it so important that all of us really hear and understand it?