

THE REVELATION

LESSON 6: THE CHURCH IN SMYRNA: HERE'S THE LOVE

Intro: B.B. Warfield

BIG IDEA: The church that loves Christ is willing to suffer for Christ.

Smyrna was one of those churches.

“A willingness to suffer proves the genuineness of love. We are willing to suffer for those we love.” **John Stott**¹⁴

Background Info:

- 35 miles _____ of Ephesus.
- A _____ City: Destroyed around 700 B.C. is lay in ruins for _____ years.
- Boasted of being the “pride of Asia” and was a very _____ city.
- Often competitive with Ephesus for prominence.
- It had an excellent natural _____, and a road to the interior. It was a _____ center.
- It was surrounded by rich _____.
- 195 B.C.: built a temple to Dea Roma. Known for their loyalty to the Empire.
- Built a temple to Emperor _____. Faithful to _____!
- Largest _____ population of any city in Asia.
- Rumored to have been founded by Paul on his way to Ephesus on his 3rd missionary journey.
- The location of the modern city of _____. Only one that remains a city.

Jesus' Self-Revelation:

⁸“And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: 'The words of the first and the last, who died and came to life.

Jesus focuses on His death and resurrection. Why is this important?

⁹“I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich) and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. ¹⁰Do not fear what you are about to

¹⁴ Stott, pp. 28

THE REVELATION

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.

Past and Present Suffering

- Following Jesus was _____ in Smyrna.
- Their refusal to worship at the temples would be costly.
- “*Poverty*”: Gentiles may have refused to _____ with them or _____ them.
- Following Jesus often resulted in economic _____.
- Though financially poor, they had a treasure the rest of the city lacked!
- “*Slander*”: _____ were _____ from the sacrificial obligations of other citizens in Smyrna.
- They opposed the Christians and made false _____.
- Rejecting Messiah, they were not true Jews. Now under the power/influence of _____.

Can you think of a similar parallel today for someone considering the claims of Christ?

Is such suffering for Christ to be expected or out of the ordinary?

²⁹For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake,... **Philippians 1**

¹²Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, ¹³while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. **2 Timothy 3**

Future Suffering

- Some will be thrown in _____ for their faith.
- The _____ of their faith will be tested.
- The testing will be _____, “10 days,” though it will be _____.

What was their possible response to the increased persecution?

What could this fear look like?

THE REVELATION

Why is they should not fear?

Similar conditions existed at least until the time of Polycarp, the Bishop of Smyrna. In 156 he was put to death for refusing to offer sacrifices to the emperor.

The Promise:

Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life. ¹¹ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death.'

- Faithfulness springs from _____.
- Jesus also promises the crown of _____ to those who remain _____.
- Jesus, as He who died and came to life, is able to keep this promise.
- The crown is for the _____ - the one who conquers. 2nd death does not touch them.
- Jesus alone can give the crown. Not their goddess _____ who's on their coins.

⁴"I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do. ⁵But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. **Luke 12**

Conflict is inevitable, and only one opponent can win. How is victory described here? How is this different from what we normally think?

Application: What does God want us to take away from this letter to the church in Smyrna?

Conclusion: