

SERMON OUTLINE

In Revelation 2:8-11 Christ commends the church in Smyrna by encouraging them with 4 truths.

- I. I give you this message (v. 8a):
 - A. I am the first and the last (v. 8b).
 - B. I am the dead come to life (v. 8c).
- II. I know what you endure:
 - A. Tribulation (v. 9a).
 - B. Poverty (v. 9b).
 - C. Slander (v. 9c).
- III. I will give you the crown of life (v. 10d).
 - A. So do not fear when you suffer (v. 10a, b).
 - B. So be faithful unto death (v. 10c).
- IV. I will save you from the second death (v. 11).

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, May 6, 2018

Passage: Revelation 2:8-11

Memory Passage: Revelation 2:9-10

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Rev. 2:8-11.** Why does Christ choose these descriptions of Himself (cf. 2:8 & 1:18) to address the Smyrna church?
- (b) What do you notice different about the content of Christ's message to Smyrna compared to His message to Ephesus?
- (c) Explain why the words "I know your" (v. 9) comforted those believers in Smyrna? How do they comfort you?
- (d) How can these believers be both in "poverty" and "rich" at the same time? Explain your answer.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Rev. 2:8-11.** What kind of "slander" are the Jews in Smyrna speaking about these believers?
- (b) Why does Jesus call the Jews in Smyrna "a synagogue of Satan?" Is this a proper thing to say about God's chosen people? Explain your answer.
- (c) How does Isaiah 44:1-8 help you answer (b) above?
- (d) Upon what basis are the Smyrna believers able to obey Jesus' command "do not fear what you are about to suffer?" Of what are you fearful, and how does this same foundation help you overcome fear in your own life?

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Rev. 2:8-11.** What kind of testing will these believers undergo when they are imprisoned, and who is testing them?
- (b) How do you reconcile the possibility of death for being faithful (v. 10) with the fact that Christ is "ruler of kings on the earth" (1:5), walks "in the midst" of the churches (1:13), holds the 7 stars "in his right hand" (1:16), and holds "the keys to death and Hades" (1:18)?
- (c) What would faithfulness unto death entail? What would compromise entail?
- (d) What is "the crown of life" received by those who are faithful unto death (do any of these help you answer: "crown" is found 7 other times in Revelation [3:11; 4:4, 10; 6:2; 9:7; 12:1; 14:14], and "crown of life" is only found here & James 1:12)?

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Rev. 2:8-11.** What is "the second death" (cf. Rev. 20:6, 14; 21:7-8)?
- (b) Why does each of these messages end with a command to hear what the Spirit says to the "churches" (plural)? Which churches are included in this command?
- (c) Each message ends with a promise to those who "conquer." What do we need to conquer and how do we do it?
- (d) Would a church today marked by struggles, persecution, poverty, and slander from other religious people be considered a success or failure by the world? By other Christians? By you? Explain your answers.

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Rev. 2:8-11.** The believers in Smyrna were under persecution from Romans yet they are told to "be faithful unto death" rather than rebel against or overthrow their government. What applications can you draw for yourself as a 21st-century believer facing persecution from your government?
- (b) The Smyrnaeans were also being persecuted by Jews. Why do professing believers persecute or cause trouble for other believers and what do you learn from Rev. 2:8-11 to help navigate times you might suffer at the hands of professing believers?
- (c) In what ways can you prepare now to "be faithful unto death" if this should ever be asked of you?
- (d) Smyrna is one of 2 of these 7 churches that does not receive a rebuke. In what ways might BCC need to consider changing or improving to receive a commendation without condemnation should Jesus visit us?

DATE: May 6, 2018

PASSAGE: Revelation 2:8-11

To Smyrna