



“Dear Church, YOU WIN”

Lessons from the Church of Ephesus

Revelation 2:8-11

Discussion -

- Have you ever suffered persecution as a result of your faith in Christ? Experienced ridicule or slander, or worse? Or do you know someone who has? If so, tell your story or their story.
- What might you say to encourage a Christian friend who is being ridiculed or persecuted for their faith?
- Do you think in the next twenty years Christians in America will face more or less persecution for their faith? Why?

Encounter - Read God’s Word so that He can speak to you—**Revelation 2:8-11**

Explore - God’s Word by asking questions of what you saw.

1)

How does Jesus reveal Himself to the church of Smyrna in v. 8? (see also Revelation 1:17-18) Why is the eternality and resurrection of Christ worth emphasizing to this church?

2)

Read verses 9-10. What words are used to describe the persecution being experienced by Christians in Smyrna? What might such persecution have looked like practically? What kinds of challenges might an average Christian in Smyrna have faced on an average day in Smyrna?

3) One commentator writes of Smyrna that “Nowhere was life more dangerous for a Christian.” Why do you think Christians in Smyrna stayed in Smyrna?

4) Read verse 10 again. What two commands does Jesus give the church of Smyrna? How do you think the Christians at Smyrna felt to hear these two commands? What emotions might they have experienced? How might they have encouraged each other to obey these commands?

5) Read Matthew 5:10-12, 2 Timothy 3:10-15, John 16:33, and James 1:1-4. What further insights do you gain from these passages about how a believer should respond to suffering?

6) What promises of God can you find in the letter to Smyrna? What promises of God have helped you through times of trial and suffering?

7)

Who is someone you know who has been a good example of how to cling to God's promises in times of suffering? What did this look like in his or her life?

8)

The message we will preach on this passage is entitled "You Win!" Do you think the church of Smyrna really "wins"? What victories could the church of Smyrna be assured of?

9)

Read the article linked below which details the martyrdom of Polycarp of Smyrna. What stands out to you the most in this article and why?

<https://www.christiantoday.com/article/faithful-in-the-fire-the-christian-legacy-of-saint-polycarp/104969.htm>

10) Watch the video at the link below which shows a scene from the movie *Tortured for Christ* based on the life of Richard Wurmbrand. What stands out to you the most and why?
<https://vimeo.com/233342428>

11) ONE BIG QUESTION: If God's promises are strong and sure enough to give believers peace, joy, and hope when facing persecution and death, what would it look like for you in specific areas and moments of your life to better demonstrate that you know and stand on the promises of God?

12) Spend some time praying for each other and for persecuted Christians around the world to be fearless and faithful in the fire of suffering and persecution!