



DEAR CHURCH IN SMYRNA

Sermon Notes

Text: Revelation 2:8-11

Intro:

This letter explains why it is so hard to be a faithful disciple of Jesus in our time; why it is so hard to stay “in love”.

In this letter, Jesus is encouraging the believers in Smyrna to exercise Faith under pressure.

Revelation 2:8-11

Sources of Pressure:

1. Roman nationalism
2. Synagogue antagonism

“Afflictions” = *Thlipsis* (pressure, tribulation)

“Thlipsis is the pressure experienced along the line where kingdoms clash; along the line where the kingdom of light clashes with the kingdom of darkness; along the line where the reign of justice clashes with the reign of injustice; along the line where the rule of life clashes with the rule of death.” ~Darrel Johnson

To follow Jesus is to inevitably experience thlipsis

John 6:68

What do we do when we face thlipsis?

1. Turn it unto a test

Test = test that helps you *improve*

Ephesians 6:12

The devil wants to prove your faith false, while Jesus works to help improve your faith

Jesus believes that a certain amount of thlipsis for the church is actually good.

2. Be patient until it passes

“10 days” = a temporary amount of time

When you are facing pressure, meditate on the something true to get you through.

3. Persevere toward the prize

If the first death is a death of the body, the second death is a death of the whole person.

Conclusion:

v. 8

“Be content to go with Jesus through the first death. He was dead, and came to life; and so will you.” ~N.T. Wright

Life Group Discussion

Warm up:

1. What stood out to you about Sunday's sermon? What was interesting? Confusing? Weird? Thought provoking?

Study & Discussion:

1. Think about your job, family, friendships, current political climate of the day, and other environments in which you live. What sort of "pressures" (thlipsis) do these environments put in your faith? How do you deal with them?
2. Read Ephesians 6:10-18. Revelation reminds us that there are spiritual powers behind the pressures we face (the Christians in Smyrna were being thrown in jail by the Devil). How does this passage in Ephesians support that idea? What does it say we should do? What are the elements of the armour of God, and how to we "put them on"?
3. Jesus doesn't promise to remove all the pressures we face, but he does promise that they won't last forever. What helps you stay patient while you deal with pressure? What are some scriptures you could meditate on that would help (brainstorm some as a group).

Prayer:

- Pray for an increase of faith for when you face pressure

Other Requests

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