****

PAIN PRESSURE PROMISE

**Don’t Quit in the Pain, Stay Faithful Under Pressure, Step into the Promise!**

The story of the church in Smyrna is a powerful reminder that following Jesus often means living under pressure, facing pain, and yet holding onto a greater promise. Smyrna was a city known for its wealth, its suffering, and its resurrection from destruction—a city that was ‘brought back from the dead’. Jesus speaks directly into this context, identifying Himself as the One who truly brings life out of death, and assuring His people that He is not distant from their suffering but intimately close, knowing every ache and every hardship they endure.

The believers in Smyrna faced intense persecution: they were excluded from society, unable to trade, mocked, and slandered for their faith. Yet, Jesus calls them “rich,” not because of material wealth, but because of their right understanding of life, their hope in resurrection, and the strength of their Christian community. Their richness was found in their spiritual formation and their ability to see beyond present suffering to the eternal reality Jesus offers.

Pressure and tribulation are not signs of God’s absence or our failure, but often the very context in which faith is refined and deepened. Jesus does not sugarcoat the reality of suffering; instead, He calls His people to spiritual disciplines—fasting, prayer, and immersion in the Word - so that when pressure comes, they are prepared to stand firm. The story of Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna, illustrates this: his faith did not remove the pressure, but gave him the courage to remain faithful even unto death.

REFLECTION

*Share something that stood out from the Sunday message ‘Pain, Pressure, Promise’.*

MESSAGE POINTS

One: Jesus Brings Dead Things to Life
Jesus introduces Himself to the church in Smyrna as the One who died and came back to life, speaking directly to their experience as a city restored from destruction. He reminds them, and us, that He alone has the power to bring all dead things back to life, whether that’s a city, a dream, or a broken heart. No matter how final a situation may seem, death does not have the last word when Jesus is present. He is intimately aware of our pain and suffering, and He draws near to us in those moments, offering hope and resurrection where we see only endings.

*Revelation 2:8-9 (ESV)
“And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: ‘The words of the first and the last, who died and came to life. 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.’”*

**Discussion**

* **Jesus identifies Himself as “the One who died and came back to Life.”**
How does remembering His eternal perspective change the way you see your current circumstances?
* **What lies or labels have attached themselves to you in times of disappointment or failure?**What would it mean to let Jesus rewrite the story with His resurrection power?
* **When was the last time you risked believing God for something impossible or long-dead?**What keeps you from praying resurrection prayers?

Two: Stay Faithful Under Pressure

The believers in Smyrna faced intense pressure, tribulation, and even the threat of death for their faith, yet Jesus called them to remain faithful. Pressure and suffering are not always signs that something is wrong; sometimes, they are evidence that we are standing firm in our convictions. Like Polycarp, who refused to deny Christ even at the cost of his life, we are called to settle our convictions before the pressure comes, so that we can stand strong when it does. Faithfulness under pressure may cost us, but it is the path to true victory and witness.

*Revelation 2:10 (ESV) “Do not fear what you are about to 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. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.”*

Story of Polycarp: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polycarp

**Discussion**

* **What pressures - external or internal - are challenging your faith right now?**
How is Jesus inviting you to remain faithful in the middle of it?
* **Have you settled your convictions about who Jesus is and what you're willing to stand for before pressure comes?**
What convictions do you need to anchor more deeply in this season?
* **Faithfulness may cost us - but what do we risk losing if we compromise?**
How does keeping your eyes on the “crown of life” help you endure today’s trials?

Three: Spiritual Disciplines Prepare Us for Trials
Daniel and his friends, when tested under pressure, chose spiritual disciplines like fasting and prayer, which gave them strength and clarity. In the same way, regular rhythms of fasting, prayer, being in community and knowing God’s Word prepare us to stand strong when trials come. These disciplines are not just religious duties, but doorways to breakthrough, clarity, and supernatural strength. When we commit to spiritual formation, God shapes us and empowers us to endure and overcome the pressures of life.

*Daniel 1:12-15 (ESV)
“Test your servants for ten days; let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then let our appearance and the appearance of the youths who eat the king’s food be observed by you, and deal with your servants according to what you see.” So he listened to them in this matter, and tested them for ten days. At the end of ten days it was seen that they were better in appearance and fatter in flesh than all the youths who ate the king’s food.”*

**Discussion**

* **What spiritual disciplines (like prayer, fasting, or time in the Word) are currently shaping your life - and which ones do you tend to avoid?**How might God be inviting you to strengthen your inner life before pressure comes?
* **Daniel’s strength under trial didn’t start in the fire - it started in his private devotion.**What small, daily spiritual habits could you build now that will prepare you to stand strong later?
* **When has a spiritual discipline opened the door to clarity, breakthrough, or unexpected strength in your life?**How could recommitting to that rhythm change how you face your current challenges?

Closing Thought

The crown isn’t just a future prize - it’s the presence of Jesus Himself. In a world that chases temporary rewards, Jesus offers us something eternal: Himself. He sees every moment of our faithfulness, every unseen sacrifice, and every tear we’ve shed. And He promises that none of it is wasted. Our suffering, our endurance, even our pain - He transforms it into something more beautiful than we can imagine. So, don’t quit in the Pain, Stay Faithful Under Pressure and Step into the Promise - Jesus.

GROUPS PRAYER POINTS

**Pray for each other’s personal journey as a disciple and discipleship in our church**

* Being in the presence of Jesus, becoming more like Jesus and continuing the work He did.

**Pray for the Holy Spirit’s presence**

* That we would be led, filled and empowered to live surrendered, love God and serve others.

**Pray for Decade of Destiny**

* **Debt Free on Sims and Stage One** Believe that we could be debt free on the purchase of Sims St and the stage one fit-out costs.
* **Launch Two New LIFE Campuses** That we would pioneer two additional LIFE campuses across Melbourne and continue to make room for more people to discover the wonder of Jesus, find their family and step into all that God leads.
* **LIFE Homes** To have short-, medium- and long-term accommodation navigable to enable emergency support, crisis help and essential care to key areas of vulnerability.
* **Education Services Engaged** It is our vision that we will have multiple pathways that we will be able to bring lasting transformation to our communities through learning and education and reverse the cycle of poverty.
* **Sims Street Revival** God is entrusting us to first and foremost lift up the names of Jesus and see many thousands upon thousands discover His eternal life.

**WATCH**

Pain Pressure Promise – Ps Kina

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OZl9HJ1A44A>

UPCOMING DATES

**July**

July 21st – Life Business Night @ Life 6pm

July 24th – Alpha @ Life 7pm

July 24th – Theology Night Course ‘The Gospel of Mathew’ @ Life 7pm

July 27th – Child Dedications @ Life 9am, 11am Services