 #2. “To The Church in Smyrna” [Revelation 2:8-11]

“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[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=rev%202&version=ESV#fen-ESV-30711a)] of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. 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. 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.’ Revelation 2:8-11

Smyrna’s Three Weights of Tribulation:
[Tribulation = θλῖψις = To Crush Beneath A Weight]

#1. The Weight of POVERTY

I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich) [vs9]

 *“The Problem Is Not With Having Money; The Problem Is, Far Too Often Money Has Us***.**

#2. The Weight of SLANDER

the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. [vs9]

#3. The Weight of SUFFERING

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. [vs10]

“*God Will Often Use Suffering & Hardship To Test The Genuineness Of Our Faith.”*you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ1 Peter 1:6-7

Victory Comes With LOYALTY To Jesus, Even Unto Death
Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life. 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. [vs11]

*“In this life loyalty to Jesus may bring Christians a “crown of thorns” in in the life to come it will surely bring them a crown of glory.” ~William Barclay~*

Application:

#1. Remember To PRAY For The Persecuted Church

#2. Be Faithful In Your LIMITED Persecution

all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. 2 Timothy 3:12

#3. Our HOPE Is Not In This Life But In The Resurrection

So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. 1Cor15:42-43

Life Group Questions
<https://www.waipunachapel.com/life-groups/>

Read Revelation 2:8-11

* + - * Why do you think Jesus introduces himself with the title he does in Revelation 2:8?
			* Jesus begins his letter with the phrase “I know” – what does this tell us about the character of Jesus, His concern for His church corporately and you individually?
			* Jesus warns the church in Smyrna of difficult times ahead, where their faith would be tested. What cultural beliefs, practices or attitudes were the source of much of this oppression and suffering?
* There is evidence of a thriving Jewish community in Smyrna at the turn of the first century. Why do you think the Jews were the source of the slander against the early church? (Read Acts 13:50, 14:2-5; 14:19; 17:5 for more context)
* Why did Rome’s recognition of Christianity as a separate religion and not just a sect of Judaism spell trouble for the Christians?
* Does the phrase “synagogue of Satan” refer to all Jews? Why is this important to distinguish?
* Did the martyrdom of Polycarp and his being faithful to death inspire you? Why do you think he considered suffering for Jesus’ worth it? (see the end of Revelation 2:10)
* Jesus has no correction or rebuke for the church in Smyrna. Do you think this is related to the severe persecution that they were facing? Why? Why not?
* Could a lack of suffering for Jesus be an unexpected danger to your faith?

(see 2 Timothy 3;12)

* Take some time to pray for the 360 million Christian around the world facing persecution today. – use Open Doors resource as a guide

Sources:
William Barclay – “The Revelation of John” – Commentary
David Guzik – “Enduring Word “Revelation Commentary

Christopher Hanauer – “Times of Fire” RightNow Media

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