

TO THE CHURCH IN SMYRNA: You Are Spiritually Rich

Revelation 2:8-11

Introduction:

1. As Christ continues to visit the churches, His second stop was in the prosperous seaport town of Smyrna.
 - A. Smyrna is 40 miles north of Ephesus.
 - B. The city had a commercial business of selling a bitter gum resin product taken from a shrubby tree called Myrrh.
2. Myrrh was in great demand in the first century.
 - A. Ps. 45:8 – It was used in making perfume.
 - B. Ex. 30:23 – It was used in the holy anointing oil for priests.
 - C. Esther 2:12 – It was used in purification of women.
 - D. John 19:39 – It was used in embalming.
3. Myrrh played a part in the life of our Lord.
 - A. Matt. 2:11 – It was one of the three gifts presented by the wisemen.
 - B. Mark 15:23 – It was placed on Jesus’s lips on the cross.
 - C. John 19:39-40 – Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea used it in the burial of Jesus.
4. Christ’s message to Smyrna is the shortest, but one of the sweetest of all.
 - I. (v. 8) **Jesus is the Perfect Church Appraiser.**
 1. Jesus addressed the pastor in the midst of the storm.
 2. Jesus gave the pastor security – “He’s the first and the last.”
 3. Jesus reminded the pastor that He died, but is now alive eternally.
 4. Jesus reminded the pastor that He has the power to carry the church through whatever comes.
 5. Jesus knew that the Smyrna church would be hated as stated in Matt. 10:22 – ***And you shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake, but he that endures to the end shall be saved.***
 6. John 16:2 – ***They shall put you out of the synagogue, yea, the time comes, that whosoever kills you will think that he does God’s service.***

{Jesus is the Perfect Church Appraiser, but . . . }

- II. (v. 2) **Jesus Gave the Perfect Church Appraisal.**
 1. Sufferings come to humble and purify us.
 2. The Bible records much suffering among Christians.
 - A. II Timothy 3:12 – ***Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.***
 - B. John 16:33 – ***These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me you might have peace. In the world, you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.***
 3. Smyrna was faithful during the martyr age of Christianity.
 4. What did Christ say about the intense suffering?
 - A. The word TRIBULATION comes from the Greek ***thlipsis***.
 - 1) This word means pressure like a heavy, life-crushing boulder upon someone.
 - 2) The word describes a millstone, grinding rock.
 - 3) The word was likened to the winepress that crushed juice from within the grapes.
 - 4) This pressure brought suffering, sorrow, and often death.
 - 5) Polycarp, a bishop in the Smyrna church, was martyred.
 - a. The Roman governor told him to swear that Caesar is Lord and we’ll let you go.
 - b. The Romans threatened Polycarp with wild beasts and burning him with fire, but his reply, “86 years I have served the Lord, and He has never done me harm, how can I blaspheme my king and Savior?”
 - c. Polycarp was burned, but the flames seemingly didn’t take his life, so they pierced him to death with the sword.
 - B. Look at the word POVERTY; it comes from the Greek word ***Penia***.
 - 1) It means to work hard and barely make a living.
 - 2) Christians were denied jobs due to their faith and were persecuted and plundered without a cause.
 5. These Christians were suffering for righteousness’ sake.
 6. Here is Christ’s evaluation of this church.
 - A. (v. 9) The word from heaven was ***But you are rich.***
 - B. This statement from Jesus makes riches out of poverty and triumph out of tribulation.

- C. God's approval makes this world's sufferings not worthy to be compared with the glory that will be revealed in us.
 - D. What matters most is not the frown of this world, but the smile of God.
 - E. Smyrna was a poor/rich church according to Jesus' evaluation.
 - F. Great buildings and cathedrals are dead without the touch of God.
7. (v. 9) Those who tormented the church from inside were hypocrites, but the majority were on heaven's band wagon.

{Jesus is the perfect church Appraiser, He gave the perfect church Appraisal, now finally . . . }

III. (vv. 10-11) Jesus Gave the Perfect Church Admonishment.

1. (v. 10) Don't be fearful.
 - A. Satan came as a lion seeking whom he could devour.
 - B. Matthew 10:28 – ***And fear not them who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.***
 - C. Persecution for godliness only makes the church stronger.
 - D. Jesus takes real, Christian persecution personally as stated in Acts 9:4-5 – ***And Saul fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? And he said, who are you? And the Lord said, I am Jesus who you persecute; it is hard for you to kick against the pricks.***
 - E. Romans 8:18 – ***For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.***
 - F. Tertullian said, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church."
2. (v. 10) Be Forever Faithful.
 - A. Be faithful even to the point of death if required.
 - B. Jesus promises a crown of life to martyrs.
 - C. Mark 8:35 – ***For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the Gospel, the same shall save it.***

3. (v. 11) Be Forever Spiritually Listening.
 - A. Individually, always obey the voice of the Lord.
 - B. The Church, collectively, must obey the voice of the Lord.
 - C. Those who obey the Holy Spirit don't have to worry about Hell.

Conclusion:

What is the Holy Spirit telling you?

The message is to obey without delay-- for delayed obedience is disobedience.