

God's Challenge to The Church

Sermon Two:

"Do Not Be Afraid of What's Coming"

Revelation 2: 8 - 11 NIV

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8 "To the angel of the church in Smyrna write: These are the words of him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again.

9 I know your afflictions and your poverty-yet you are rich! I know the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

Revelation 2: 8 - 11 NIV

10 Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.

11 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death.

I. Introduction

- The church is sometimes called upon to suffer terrible persecution.
 - This has always been true throughout history, and it was certainly true in Smyrna.
 - The church was under heavy attack from both the community and city officials.
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- And there was even more horrible persecution lying over the horizon.
 - The church was faithful to Christ and His mission.
 - The church was standing fast for the truth against all attacks.
 - Smyrna was the picture of what a church should be.
 - A dynamic witness for Jesus Christ through all circumstances no matter the trial or temptation.
 - The letter is addressed to the minister of the church.

- This is significant, for it means that the minister is held responsible for the church.
- The minister takes the lead in standing fast against persecution.

II. The Church is commended for four things:

1. The church held up under terrible tribulation.
 - Tribulation means affliction, the pressure of crushing affliction.
 - This word indicates that the trials and persecutions were most severe.
 - Believers (the church) were faithful to Christ despite all the ridicule, mockery, abuse, cursing, loss of property, possible imprisonment and martyrdom.

II. The Church is commended for four things:

2. The church held up under extreme poverty.
 - Believers (the church) lost much causing them to be destitute.
 - Apparently many were forced out of their jobs and had their property confiscated.

II. The Church is commended for four things:

3. The church was spiritually wealthy.
 - They were outwardly poor, but inwardly rich toward the Lord and His mission.
 - They were faithful to the Lord.
 - Because of their faithfulness, they were filled with all the fullness of God's presence.
 - God poured out upon them the riches of His grace and the fruit of His Spirit.

II. The Church is commended for four things:

4. The church withstood all kinds of slander.

III. The Challenge (v.10):

- Do not be afraid of what's coming.
- Why should we not be afraid?
 1. It is only a test.
 2. It will only last for a moment.
 3. The Lord has something better.