

The Seven Letters: The Church at Smyrna Revelation 2:8–11

“Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He never did me any injury: how then can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour? ... You threaten me with fire which burns for an hour, and after a little is extinguished, but are ignorant of the fire of the coming judgment and of eternal punishment, reserved for the ungodly. But why do you tarry? Bring forth what you will.” (*The Martyrdom of Polycarp*)

Christians Should Suffer Fearlessly and Faithfully

“Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.” (Revelation 12:17)

“Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” (2 Timothy 3:12)

Because of Who Jesus Is and What He Has Done

“Fear not. I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.” (Revelation 1:17–18)

“In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, 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 Christ.” (1 Peter 1:6–7)

“When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie, my grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply. The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design, thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.” (“How Firm a Foundation”)

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.” (2 Corinthians 8:9)

“This is the end, for me the beginning of life.” (Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

“Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.” (James 1:12)

“This is the second death, the lake of fire.” (Revelation 20:14)

“But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.” (Revelation 21:8)

“And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Matthew 10:28)

Notes

Discuss

- What persecution (or other form of suffering) are you experiencing, and how do Jesus' statements to the church in Smyrna encourage you?
- Why does it matter whether or not a Christian is willing to suffer for Jesus, even if they're not actively experiencing persecution?
- After taking a focused look at two of the letters (to Ephesus and to Smyrna), how is your answer to this question developing?: If Jesus wrote a letter to our church family, what would it say?

Read

Psalm 4:1–8; Matthew 5:1–12; 2 Corinthians 8:1–15; James 2:1–7

Pray

- Pray that the Holy Spirit would give the members of our church family strength to be faithful to Jesus in spite of struggle and opposition.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit would help you to have a greater confidence in who Jesus is and what he has done for his people.

Announcements

- Men's Breakfast: July 9 at 8:00am
- Lunch for College and Young Professionals: July 10
- Baptism Service and Member's Meeting: July 10