

**Series: You Got Mail** (May 5th, 2019)

**Title: Smyrna: The Persecuted Church**

**Text: (Rev 2:8-11)**

Satan's Objective is to quench the Light of the Gospel.

Smyrna - Myrrh - Suffering

Myrrh:

At the Birth of Christ - (Matt 2:11)

At the Death of Christ - (Mk 15:23)

At the Burial of Christ - (Jn 19:39-40)

Became a Sweet Savor unto God.

### **The Confirmation of Christ:**

**(Rev 2:8) And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write;**

Smyrna:

Known as the "Glory of Asia"

Birthplace of Homer.

Worship of Cybele: "Mother of God" Zeus

Queen of Heaven

### ***These things saith the first and the last,***

The Person Speaking: Christ Jesus (Rev 1:11)

*"First & the Last"* - The Deity of Christ

(Is 44:6) *Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.*

(Is 48:12-13) God the Creator.

(Is 43:10-11) *Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe*

*me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour.*

***"which was dead, and is alive;"*** - (Rev 1:18)

This was a comfort to the Smyrnans facing death.

Jesus is acquainted with the Suffering & Death.

(Rom 6:4) *Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father...*

### **The Commendation of Christ:**

**(Rev 2:9a) *I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich)***

### **The Persons of the Church:** Individual Suffering Christians

Works: I see All! I know All!

I gave you a pastor to teach & Train you for the Work.

(Eph 4:11-12) *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

Christ Knows Our Works, & will not forget them, but will evaluate them to Reward us.

(1 Cor 3:11-15)

### **Christ Promises to Reward Our Service to Him:**

(Rev 22:12) *Christ has their reward waiting.*

**Tribulation:** - Spiritual Endurance  
Christ knows their afflictions & by whom they receive them.

**Poverty:** - Heavenly Treasures

Not saying “*Ceasar is Lord*” cost them all them everything.  
Their personal property was seized.  
Their rights as citizens revoked.  
Some were Carried to Rome for the Arena.  
They had nothing of earthly Gain, but Jesus commended,

**(but thou art rich)**

Not all wealth can be stored in a vault!  
Their Account at Smyrna Bank and Trust was 0\$  
but their Account in Heaven was busting t the seams.

Heaven’s Accounting System is not the Same as Earth’s.  
God doesn’t pay on Friday, but on Resurrection Day!  
Poor in Man’s Sight, but Rich in God’s sight.

Their Wealth came at a price: The suffering of Jesus!  
*(2 Cor 8:9) For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.*

They thought they were Broke, but God said they were rich.

The Ephesian Church thought they were doing Good, but God said repent or Else I am leaving.  
Do you think you are OK?  
Do you think God thinks your OK?

How is your heavenly portfolio trending?  
*(Col 1:10) That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;*

Earthly Poverty is nothing to be ashamed of. (James 2:5)  
*Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?*  
(Lk 6:20) *Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God*

this church had been reduced to financial beggary, they possessed great spiritual wealth.

**The Condemnation of Christ:**

Not a single negative thing said to this church.  
***(Rev 2:9b) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.***

**The Pretenders: Say they are Jews** (Rom 2:28-29)  
Are Not followers of God (Synagogue of Satan)  
They had teamed up with the Romans to Persecute the Church

They hated the Christians and wanted to stamp out they church there.

Blasphemous: If you are not following God through His Word, you will an effective tool of the devil.

Christ had the NT Baptist church to represent him on earth.  
Satan has created his counterfeits.

Pictures of the Parable of the Wheat & Tares  
They say they are the people of God, but deny His word.  
Mormons, JW, 7th Day Adventist, Muslims, etc.

**The Consultation of Christ:**

**(Rev 2:10) *Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.***

### **The Persecution of the Church:**

***Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer:***

What? Suffer? Whoa, hey, that was not in the brochure. I did not sign up for this.

***behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried;***

Your faith will be tested!

***and ye shall have tribulation ten days:***

Satan does not have unlimited power.

Not all at Smyrna would die in this persecution.

They would only have it 10 days, then it would be over.

### **3 Inevitabilities in Life: 3 Things we all face.** **Suffering, Persecution, & Death.**

#### **1. Suffering:**

##### ***- Christ Suffered***

(Ps 69:26) *For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten;*

(Jn 5:16) *And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him,*

- Christ Voluntarily Submitted to it: (Is 50:6)

- Christ was Patient: (Is 53:7) *“Opened not his mouth”*

##### ***- Why do we Suffer?***

***- Christ promised that we will Suffer:***

(Jn 16:33) *These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*

(1 Pet 2:21) *For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:*

(1 Thes 3:4) *For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.*

#### ***Suffering cannot Separate us from God:***

(Rom 8:35) *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

#### **For the Glory of God**

Lazarus died for the Glory of God

(ROM 8:17-23,25)

(2 Cor 4:11-18) \*18 how to handle suffering

- To Purify us: (Job 23:9-10) *On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him: But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.*

(1 Pet 5:10)

- Fruit of Suffering is Patience: (Rom 5:3-5)

- Comfort, and the ability to Comfort Others: (2 Cor 1:4)

- God is clearly see through your Suffering: (2 Thes 1:4-6)\*5  
(2 Cor 12:7-11)

***- Sometimes Our We Suffer B/c of our Choices.***

*(Sign Pic Here)*

*(Ecc 11:9) Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.*

*(Gal 6:7-8) Reap what you sow.*

Inevitabilities: Suffering &...

## **2. Persecution:**

Jesus said we would be Persecuted: (Jn 15:20)

Paul said we would be Persecuted: (2 Tim 3:12)

### **Why is there Persecution?**

**Ignorance of God:** (Jn 16:3) *And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.*

**Hatred of God & Christ:** (Jn 15:20-\*24)

**Hatred of the Gospel:** (Matt 13:21)

**Pride, Too Proud to Admit they are Wrong:**

(Ps 10:2) *The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor:*

**Mistaken Zeal:**

*Think they are serving God:* (Acts 13:50; 26:9-11)

### **How are we as Christians supposed to Face Suffering & Persecution?**

Commit Ourselves to God: (1 Pet 2:23b)(1 Pet 4:19)

Exhibit Patience: (1 Cor 4:12)

Rejoice:

*(Matt 5:12) Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.*

*(1 Pet 4:13) But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.*

We will be Blessed for it: (Matt 5:10)(Lk 6:22)

Glorify God:

*(1 Pet 4:16) Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.*

*(2 Tim 1:12) For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*

“Christian” is more than a Label you put on.

God is more than any of your past hurts. (Pray for healing)

God is more than your current medical condition. (Pray for healing)

God is more than your past mistakes.

Pray for Deliverance: (Ps 7:1)(Ps 119:86)

Pray for those that Persecute you: (Matt 5:44)

Overcome Evil with Good: (Rom 12:21)

Pray for those who suffer: (2 Thes 3:2)

Stay Faithful: (Matt 10:22) *And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.*

*Inevitabilities: Suffering, Persecution, & ...*

**3. Death: Death rate is 1 per person.**

(Heb 9:27) *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:*

Christ's Promise to all Believers who face death:

(John 11:25-26) *Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: 26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?*

**Do You Believe?** (give the Gospel)

**The Prescriptions for the Saints:**

***“Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer:”***

I am with you!

I will never leave you!

(Heb 13:5) *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

(1 Jn 4:4) *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*

**The Persuasion of the Father:**

***... be thou faithful unto death,***

***and I will give thee a crown of life.*** a Reward for Faithfulness

(Rev 22:12) *Christ has their reward waiting.*

Crown of Life is Not Salvation, but the Reward for Faithfulness.

(James 1:12) *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.*

***He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches;***

**The Consolation of Christ:**

***(Rev 2:11) He that overcometh***

**The Promise of the Father:**

***He that overcometh... (1 Jn 5:4-5)***

**What is an Overcomer?**

Not overcoming Sickness, poverty, hardship, etc.

Because we get the Glory for that, not Christ.

Overcoming the Fleshly Temptation to Fulfill the Flesh, rather than Glorify God.

(2 Tim 2:12) *If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:*

Many people confess they know Christ.

How many of them will Christ confess that He knows?

***“shall not be hurt of the second death.”***

***They can Kill You, but they Can't Eat You!***

Not being hurt of the second death clearly implies one's name being written in the Lamb's book of life as described in Revelation 20:12-15. Such is to be saved.

***... be thou faithful unto death,***

Overcoming the Desire of the Flesh to Quit.

The overcoming in this regard is that of victory over the devil's opposition when one turns to Christ.

***Faithful means...***

Firm in adherence to the truth.

Firm in adhering to duty; loyal; true to our allegiance.

Constant in the performance of duties or services;

True

**In the Face of Life's Inevitabilities,  
Faithful is the only area we have a choice in.**

*(1 Pet 4:1-2) Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; 2 That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.*

Being an Overcomer means choosing to be faithful in spite of Suffering, Persecution, & Death.

**You are not the Only Person who is going through the same thing you are!**

**By Faith: We are examples to others who Suffer:**

*(James 5:10) Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.*

*shall not be hurt of the second death...* (Rev 20:14-15)

*I will give thee a crown of life...* Glory, Authority, Worship