

## **WHAT JESUS LOOKS FOR IN A CHURCH** **(Christ's Messages to the Seven Churches in Revelation 2-3)**

**REVIEW:** Last week we looked at the church at Ephesus. Despite faithfully serving Christ for 40 years they did not love Him as they once did, and as His Bride, had stopped giving Him the one thing He wanted most, their heartfelt worship. Their Christianity had deteriorated into a routine to endure rather than a relationship to enjoy. Christ knowing this is the first step in spiritual decline which inevitably leads to unfaithfulness, challenged the church to repent and return to Him as their first love, or the light of their testimony would grow dim & eventually be extinguished.

### **The Church at Smyrna (Revelation 2: 8-11)** **The Church the Devil Tried to Intimidate**

**INTRODUCTION:** If the first mark Jesus looks for in a church is heartfelt worship, the second is **FAITHFULNESS IN SUFFERING**, which proves the genuineness of our love for Christ. This is what Christ found in the church at Smyrna.

#### **THE SUFFERING ENDURED FOR CHRIST**

##### **1. CRUSHING PRESSURE**

*I know your tribulation...(v. 9a)*

##### **2. DESTITUTION**

*I know your tribulation & your poverty (but you are rich)...(v. 9b)*

##### **3. SLANDER**

*...and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. (v. 9c)*

##### **4. IMPRISONMENT**

*Behold the devil is about to cast some of you in prison...(v. 10b)*

##### **5. MARTYRDOM**

*Be faithful unto death...(v. 10c)*

#### **THE COMFORT RECEIVED FROM CHRIST**

##### **1. HE IS VICTORIOUS**

*The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life...(v. 8)*

##### **2. HE IS ALL KNOWING**

*I KNOW your tribulation and your poverty and the blasphemy...(v. 9)*

##### **3. HE IS IN CONTROL**

*Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison...and you will have tribulation for ten days. (v. 10)*

#### **4th: HE IS PURPOSEFUL**

*... that you may be tested...(v.10)*

*For the more we suffer for Christ, the more God will shower us with His comfort through Christ.*

**2 Corinthians 1: 5 (NLT)**

### **THE LESSONS LEARNED FROM SMYRNA**

#### **1. EXPECT TO SUFFER**

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

*Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you.*

**1 Peter 4: 12**

#### **2. STOP BEING AFRAID**

*Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you in prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. (v. 10)*

*When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You. In God, whose Word I praise, in God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. What can mere man do to me?*

**Psalm 56: 4**

#### **3. KEEP ON BEING FAITHFUL**

*Be faithful unto death...(v. 10)*

*And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even to death.*

**Revelation 12: 11**

#### **4. LOOK TO THE REWARD**

*Be faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life. (v. 10)*

*Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.*

**James 1: 12**

*What blessings await you when people hate you and exclude you and mock you and curse you as evil because you follow the Son of Man. When that happens, be happy! Yes, leap for joy! For a great reward awaits you in heaven.*

**Luke 6: 22-23 (NLT)**

**Best beloved of my soul,  
I am here alone with Thee;  
And my prison is a heaven  
Since Thou sharest it with me.**