

The 7th Sunday after Pentecost ~ Sunday, July 8, 2018
“Letters to the 7 Churches ~ Smyrna”



JESUS' 2 TITLES

“Write this letter to the angel of the church in Smyrna. This is the message from the one who is the First and the Last, who was dead but is now alive...” (Revelation 2:8)

#1. He is the:

“...for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been

created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together.” (Colossians 1:16-17)

#2. He is the:

“If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first...” (John 15:18)

The _____.

“I know about your suffering and your poverty—but you are rich! I know the blasphemy of those opposing you. They say they are Jews, but they are not, because their synagogue belongs to Satan.” (Revelation 2:9)

JESUS' 3 COMPLIMENTS

#1. He commends them for faithfully enduring _____.
thilipsis =

“We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. We are perplexed, but not driven to despair. We are hunted down, but never abandoned by God. We get knocked down, but we are not destroyed. Through suffering, our bodies continue to share in the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be seen in our bodies. Yes, we live under constant danger of death because we serve Jesus, so that the life of Jesus will be evident in our dying bodies. So we live in the face of death, but this has resulted in eternal life for you.” (2 Corinthians 4:8)

“I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I want to suffer with him, sharing in his death, so that one way or another I will experience the resurrection from the dead!” (Philippians 3:10)

What are you willing to do for Jesus?
How far are you willing to go for your faith?

#2. He commends them for faithfully enduring _____.
penia =

ptocheia =

plousios =

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matthew 6:19-20)

“You know the generous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty he could make you rich.” (2 Corinthians 8:9)

Where do you keep your treasure?
Are you rich in earthly things or spiritual things?

#3. He commends them for faithfully enduring _____.
blasphemia =

Examples of slander against the church in Smyrna:

Synagogue of satan =

“For you are not a true Jew just because you were born of Jewish parents or because you have gone through the ceremony of circumcision. No, a true Jew is one whose heart is right with God. And true circumcision is not merely obeying the letter of the law; rather, it is a change of heart produced by God’s Spirit. And a person with a changed heart seeks praise from God, not from people.” (Romans 2:28)

Have you ever had someone spread rumours or tell lies about you?
Have you ever told lies about anyone else?

“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, lie, and say all kinds of evil things about you because of me. Rejoice and be glad because you have a great reward in heaven! The prophets who lived before you were persecuted in these ways.” (Matthew 5:11)

The _____.

“Don’t be afraid of what you are about to suffer. The devil will throw some of you into prison to test you. You will suffer for ten days. But if you remain faithful even when facing death, I will give you the crown of life.” (Revelation 2:10)

JESUS’ COUNSEL

#1. Do not _____!

“Don’t be afraid of those who want to kill your body; they cannot touch your soul....” (Matthew 10:28)

#2. Be _____!

“Blessed are those who endure when they are tested. When they pass the test, they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.” (James 1:12)

crown =

“Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)

“Whoever is victorious will not be harmed by the second death.” (Revelation 2:10)

“Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches.” (Revelation 2:7)

**Do you have ears to hear or are you too distracted
by the noise of the world?**

God is speaking—are we listening?



Persecution in the Early Church: Acts 3-5

Persecution as a topic forms a major theme in Luke-Acts. We see this clearly in the life of Jesus in Luke's gospel. We also see this in the way that Luke joined Jesus and the apostles in Acts through the theme of suffering.

Read Acts 3:1-26 and 4:1-4

1. Who is doing the persecution and what is the reason given? Be specific.
2. Why would the apostles' actions be deemed grounds for being jailed?

Read Acts 4:4-14

1. What occurred after Peter and John were arrested? Who was present?
2. What is the question that prompts Peter's response?
3. What does Peter say in response to the question from the religious leaders?
4. What instructions were given to Peter and John? (Note the similarity to 4:2)

5. What is Peter's response? How does this compare to his response in 5:26-32 after his second arrest?

Read 4:23-31

1. What did Peter and John do after their release and what was God's response?

Read Acts 5:40-41

1. What occurred to Peter and John after their second arrest and release? What was their response?
2. What does this say about how God may respond to his servants in times of persecution?

Questions for Reflection

1. Have you or are you currently suffering because of your faith? This need not be something as drastic as the apostles in Jerusalem.
2. How do you deal with this type of situation?
3. What are some possible responses you might have to suffering or persecution in your life?
4. Do you foresee a time in Canada when religious freedom will be curtailed? If this were to happen, would you still be willing to stand for Christ?
5. What is our hope in the face of suffering?
6. How does the suffering of Christians around the world effect you? What can you do to help?

Notes: