

Faithful to DEATH

Revelation 2:8-11

Isaiah 48:12-18

Colossians 1:15-23

Growing As Real Disciples

- It is OUR turn NOW!
- ALL of God's commands (expressions of His love) have not changed.
- They are NOT on HOLD because of COVID!
- As professed disciples it will take ALL of us doing our part so that all of us can grow as individuals and as a BODY. (Ephesians 4:16)
- It will take:
 - **DESIRE** to grow. (Luke 9:23; Ezekiel 11:19; 36:26-27; Philippians 2:13; Psalm 42:1)
 - **DETERMINATION** (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)
 - **DISCIPLINE** (Hebrews 12:1-2; Romans 12:12; Col 1:11; 2 Timothy 2:3-4, 12)
 - **DILIGENCE** (Deut 4:9; 6:7; 28:1; 2 Chron 34:33; Psalm 119:4; Proverbs 4:23; Romans 12:8; 2 Tim 2:15; Hebrews 4:11; 11:6; 2 Peter 2:5-8, 10; 3:14-18)
 - **DO** it. (James 1:12; Matt 7:21-23, 24-27; 12:50; Luke 8:21; 11:28; 1 Peter 4:2; 1 John 2:3-6; Deut 10:12-13)
- There can be no "I will wait until it is over" disciples.

To the Church at Smyrna write:

Smyrna: The City

- Smyrna is located about 55-60 km north of Ephesus.
- Smyrna was a beautiful city. It was called "the Ornament of Asia"; "the **Crown** of Asia"; "the Flower of Asia".
- It was a great, wealthy, and important city.
- Smyrna was a free city and was known for its loyalty and faithfulness to Rome - unlike many other cities.



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- It was the first to build a temple to the Roman goddess Roma.
- Temple of Dionysus and Tiberius.
- Important center for the Roman imperial **CULT**.
- Boasted as the **FIRST** city in Asia. (First in beauty, first in literature, first in loyalty to Rome.).
- The citizens of Smyrna **BOASTED** of their city all the time.
- "Smyrna" is related to the Greek word meaning "MYRRH" (Used two
- Destroyed in A. D. 178 by an earthquake. Modern day Izmir.

CHURCH HISTORY: The PERSECUTED Church of the second and third centuries.

- Ten Tyrants: (From Nero to Constantine)
- ★ Historian, Tertullian, said: "The **BLOOD** of the martyrs is the **SEED** of the church."

The Master's Title (Revelation 2:8)

- "The **FIRST** and the **LAST**." (Colossians 1:18; Isaiah 41:4; 44:6; 46:10-11; 48:12-13)
- "DIED and is **LIVING**" Literally, "He came to be dead and began to live, or came to life again."
 - Christ experienced the **WORST** of LIFE, therefore, He can sympathize with any persecution, trouble, or tribulation that might come our way! (Hebrews 4:15)
- Christ identifies with His church. (Isaiah 63:8-9; Heb 2:17-18; 4:15)
- Even God's titles bring **COMFORT**.

"I KNOW YOUR WORKS . . ."

The Master's Commendation (Revelation 2:9-10)

- Christ knew of their **TRIBULATIONS** and **POVERTY**.
 - "tribulation" – "to press down"; "to pressure"; "crushing beneath a weight"
 - **PURPOSE for PERSECUTION:**
 - ① **PURIFY** and **PURGE** of SIN
 - ② **REFINE** and **STRENGTHEN** GENUINE FAITH (Romans 5:
 - ③ **UNCOVERS** and **DESTROYS** FALSE FAITH
 - Consider Matthew 13:20-22.

- PERSECUTION is a part of the COST (Luke 14:25-33) that Christ **demands** all who would consider to be a Christian to consider.
 - See 2 Tim 3:12; John 15:20; 16:33; Acts 14:22; **1 Peter 4:12-19**
- PERSECUTION: From the **GOVERNMENT** and the **CHURCH**.
- Their suffering came by not calling Caesar **LORD**.
 - Part of being a Christian is **acknowledging** the LORDSHIP of Christ.
 - When we call Jesus LORD (Romans 10:9-10) we acknowledge:
 - ① That my LIFE belongs to Him – He is my OWNER. (1 Corinthians 6:19; Psalm 100:3; Romans 14:7-9; 2 Corinthians 5:14; Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 2:9)
 - ② That I am now to LIVE according to His commandments – He is my RULER. (1 John 5:3; John 14:15, 21-23; 15:10-14; Luke 6:46)
 - ③ That I live to SERVE Him – He is my MASTER. (Matthew 6:24; Luke 16:13; Joshua 24:15)
- POVERTY here literally means **“to have absolutely nothing”**.
 - Consider 2 Cor 6:10; 8:9; Matt 6:19-20; Luke 16:11; 2 Co 8:1-5.
- Christ calls counterfeit Jews: “Thy synagogue of **SATAN**.”
 - ✦ Consider John 8:44
- What makes a REAL Jew? (See Romans 2:28-29; Galatians 3:14)

The Master’s Criticism: He has **NONE!!!**

- They did not have the **APPROVAL** of **MEN** but they had the approval of **GOD**. (**Galatians 1:10; Luke 6:26; 16:15**)

The Master’s Instructions (Revelation 2:10)

- **FEAR** none of these persecutions! Literally, “**FEAR NOTHING!**” (See Luke 12:4-9; Philippians 4:6-8; 1 Peter 5:7; Isaiah 41:10)
- The **DEVIL** has thrown **SOME** into prison.
 - See Job 1:12; 2:6; 1 Peter 4:17; **Luke 22:30-31**
- God allowed this so that they might be **TESTED!**
 - ★ God is a **TESTING GOD**. (Deuteronomy 8:2-3; 13:1-11; Proverbs 17:3; James 1:13; 1 Peter 1:7)
 - ✦ Job 23:10
- What is to be tried? Your **FAITH**. (1 Peter 1:6-9)
- How is faith tried?
 - JOB: by **SEVERE** adversity.
 - ABRAHAM: by a call to great **SACRIFICE**. (Genesis 22)

- JOSEPH: by a temptation to **SIN**. (Genesis 39:7-11)
- DANIEL: by **DECEITFUL** workers. (Daniel 6)
- Why is faith tried? – 1 Peter 1:7 – for **GOD’S** pleasure and glory.
- **PROMISE: MORE** tribulation is coming!
 - ★ “10 DAYS” – This shows that God is **sovereign** over tribulation!
- “Be faithful unto **DEATH**”. (Psalm 116:15; Matt. 5:10-12; **1 Peter 4:12-19**)

The Master’s Promise (Revelation 2:10-11)

- A **CROWN** of **LIFE**. See James 1:12 **THIS IS NOT ETERNAL LIFE**. Eternal life is a **GIFT** from God. (Romans 6:23). This crown is **EARNED!**
 - ★ CROWNS:
 - “Hold on to your crown.” (Revelation 3:11)
 - Crown of Righteousness. (2 Timothy 4:8)
 - For all who long for His coming.
 - Crown of Discipleship (1 Corinthians 9:5; 2 Timothy 2:5)
 - Crown of Life. (James 1:12; Revelation 2:10)
 - Crown of Glory. (1 Peter 5:4)
 - For faithful Pastors (Elders).
 - 24 Elders present their crowns to God. (Revelation 4:4, 10)
 - Crowns are earned only by following the rule. (2 Timothy 2:5)
- This kind of crown was award to winners of races. Life is a race and we are to run it **to win!** (Acts 20:24; Hebrews 12:1-2; 1 Cor 9:24-27; 2 Tim. 4:7-8)
- Overcomers (faithful to the end - Matthew 10:22; 24:13; Mark 13:13) will not suffer the **SECOND** death – **ETERNAL DEATH**.
 - ✦ Revelation 20:6, 14; 21:8; John 5:24; 11:25