

GROW GROUP QUESTIONS

Announcement: [Neighbor's Day](#) is a great opportunity to step into what is *NEAR*. Consider signing up as a Grow Group and serving side by side.

Opening Prayer Prompts For Group:

P–Praise Jesus as the First and the Last, the one **who died and came to life again**, being victorious over death.

R– Repent of where you've defined "richness" by **earthly standards instead of spiritual ones**.

A–Ask God to help you turn **suffering** into something **that gives him glory**.

Y–Yield your **fear of suffering** to Jesus

Ice Breaker: Are you more of a "prepare for every scenario" person or a "figure it out when we get there" person?

The Sermon Setup: Read Revelation 2:8–11 Smyrna

- Jesus introduces himself to Smyrna as "the First and the Last, the one who was dead and came to life". Why would that specific description of Jesus matter so much to a suffering church?
- Jesus says, "I know your affliction and poverty, but you are rich." What does he want them to understand about their situation?
- In this context, suffering is *"loss or pain that comes from not compromising your faith"*. Do you tend to see suffering as something to avoid, endure, or something God can use to grow you?
- It can be easy to misidentify why we are in pain: normal life circumstances or real spiritual suffering. Do you think the source of our pain matters? Why or why not?

Going Deeper

- What is an area of your life where following Jesus has cost you something? How did you respond? (Specific to your life, not culturally)
- Jesus tells them, "Don't be afraid of what you are about to suffer." What is the difference between pretending suffering is not hard and facing it without fear? What does that look like for you?
- What do you think faithfulness "to the point of death" looks like for ordinary believers in everyday life here in La Crosse?

- When one of us experiences loss or pressure because of our faith, how can we support each other both practically and spiritually?