

The Attractiveness of Suffering

Revelation 2:8-11

Purpose: To explore the suffering Christians may have to experience and to learn what it means to endure such suffering.

Group Discussion: If you knew a really difficult season was coming (and you couldn't avoid it) what's the one thing you would want someone to say to you? Why?

1. (Verse 8) What stands out to you about the way Jesus describes himself as "*the First and the Last, who died and came to life again*" ? Why do you think Smyrna needed to hear that first?
2. In verse 9 Jesus tells the church "*I know your afflictions.*" What does it mean to you personally that Jesus doesn't just *allow* suffering, He *sees* it? How does that change the way you process hard seasons?
3. (Verse 9) Jesus says the church is poor, yet rich. Where in your own life do you find yourself measuring your worth or success by the world's standards instead of God's? What would it look like to genuinely believe you are rich in the ways that matter most?
4. (Verse 10) Jesus doesn't promise the church an escape from suffering. He promises a *limit* on it and a *reward* after it. Is that comforting to you, or does it feel like a hard pill to swallow? Why? Why not?
5. (Verse 10) This passage reveals that behind human opposition is a spiritual enemy. How have difficult seasons in your life tested or strengthened your faith?
6. (Verse 10) Jesus commands the church to "*not be afraid*" even while acknowledging that real and serious danger is coming. In your experience, what helps you keep fear from becoming the loudest voice in your life?
7. (Verse 10) The church at Smyrna was faithful under pressure that most of us will never face. But faithfulness costs something in everyday life too. What does everyday faithfulness look like for you, not in dramatic moments but in the normal days?
8. (Verse 10) Jesus promises the "*crown of life*" to those who remain faithful. How does keeping eternity in view change the way you handle present challenges?
9. (Verse 11) The letter closes with a promise that overcomers will not be hurt by the *second death*. How does knowing that your eternal future is secure give you strength to face today's pressures?