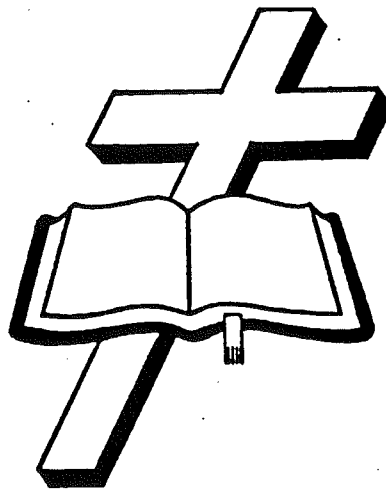


THOU ART “RICH”

(The Lord's Definition Of A Wealthy Person)
Revelation 2:8-11



“YOU WILL BE TRIED”

- ◆ The Commendation That Lifts You (V. 9)
- ◆ The Counsel That Protects You (V. 10)
- ◆ The Crown That Awaits You (V. 11)

“I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich)”
(Revelation 2:9)

Bill Kirk

"THOU ART RICH"

Text: Revelation 2:8-11

Subject: "The Lord's Definition Of A Wealthy Person"

Introduction

Fact: The Lord is writing this letter to believers in Smyrna (V.8) "And unto the angel (the pastor) of the church in Smyrna"

- ◆ Smyrna was a city located 35 miles North of Ephesus.
- ◆ It was a large commercial center filled with pagan temples.
- ◆ The city still exists today (and is called Izmir)

Fact: The name Smyrna means: "Bitter".

- ◆ It received its name from one of its chief commercial products. (Myrrh)
- ◆ Myrrh was a gum like substance taken from a shrub. (It was very bitter)
- ◆ It was used primarily in 5 ways:
 - #1. For making perfume. (Psalm 45:8)
 - #2. For the holy anointing oil. (Exodus 30:23)
 - #3. For embalming the dead. (John 19:39)
 - #4. For purification of women. (Esther 2:12)
 - #5. For relieving pain. (Mark 15:23)

Fact: Myrrh had to be crushed to become useful (and Smyrna was experiencing what its name said, crushing, affliction and persecution).

Question: Why was Smyrna being persecuted and afflicted?

Answer: Because many of the early converts were Jews:

- ◆ The Jews were influential in city politics.
- ◆ These Jewish citizens reacted severely to other Jews getting saved.
- ◆ They did all they could do to influence the city officials to stamp out the church.

Question: Why was it so difficult to be a Christian in Smyrna?

Answer: Because genuine believers wouldn't worship the gods and goddesses of the day.

- ◆ They were being pressured and persecuted and the Lord looks out of heaven and sends them an encouraging post card.

Question: How many of you have ever needed (or received) an uplifting letter?

Question: How many of you have ever been encouraged by the Lord?

(Smyrna (and you and I) Have Received A Post Card Directly From The Heart Of Jesus)

Question: In (V.8), who is writing and speaking to you?

Answer: "These things saith the First and the Last, which was dead, and is alive"

Question: Who is it that is talking to us?

Answer: It's none other than Jesus Himself.

(And V. 8 Is An Encouragement Of The Highest Order)

#1. Jesus is the First and the Last (which means:)

- ◆ Jesus has the supreme authority in your life.
- ◆ Jesus is with you through every troubled water.
- ◆ Jesus is in charge over everything that touches you.
- ◆ Jesus still controls the ability to work all things for your own good.

#2. Jesus was dead and is alive again (which means:)

(Something that will inspire Smyrna and you)

- ◆ The word "was" in "was dead" is (Genomenos).
- ◆ This word means "became". (Jesus became dead)
- ◆ It means Jesus' death was only a passing phase.
- ◆ It was an episode (a season) He had to pass through.
- ◆ Yes He died, but death was only a passing thing for Jesus.

Fact: The word "alive" is the aorist tense in the Greek (which means) "A once-for all act". (Pg. 1 of 4)

◆ It means Jesus arose, came to life again and it is finished forevermore.

Question: Pastor, how does this encourage my heart and every believer?

Answer: This message to Smyrna is:

- ◆ That no matter what you experience, it is only a passing episode.
- ◆ That no matter what you pass through, it is only a temporary season. (In other words)
- ◆ If Jesus conquered (and just “passed through”) death which is the toughest battle,
- ◆ (Those who belong to Jesus will also get through whatever they experience (those lesser battles compared to death).
- ◆ It is only a passing episode (a season) that will see Jesus take you through.

(In Plain Vanilla)

- ◆ If Jesus was dead (and was able to come back to life)
- ◆ Then Jesus is able to enable those who belong to Him to pass through any lesser difficulty.

Question: Pastor, What is the message to the believers in Smyrna?

Question: And what is the message to my heart today?

I. The Commendation That Lifts You In (V.9)

“I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of satan” (v. 9)

Fact: Jesus begins all 7 letters to the 7 churches with the words “I know thy works”

(It Means):

- ◆ The Lord is acquainted with you (or He knows everything there is to know that surrounds your life).

Question: What does the Lord commend believers for in Smyrna?

Answer: In Ephesus, Jesus commended believers for 4 things:

#1. Servanthood #2. Patience #3. Convictions #4. Discernment

**But Now In Smyrna
(The 3 Things That Jesus Is Proud Of In Your Life)
3 Things That Arrest His Attention**

#1. When you bear up under personal affliction

“..I know your tribulation. (V. 9)

- ◆ The word tribulation (THLIPSIN) means affliction.
- ◆ It refers to the most severe persecution.

Question: Why were Smyrna believers afflicted by the Roman government?

Answer: Because they refused to worship anyone else but Jesus.

Question: What did it cost to be a Christian?

- Answer:**
- #1. In many cases you lost your job.
 - #2. Your social life in the city was severed.
 - #3. Abuse and scorn covered your footsteps.
 - #4. There was loss of property.
 - #5. You faced imprisonment.
 - #6. You could easily be martyred.

- ◆ But Jesus takes notice when ever you suffer for your allegiance to His Lordship.

Application: I Peter 4:12-14

#2. When you bear up under personal loss

(V. 9) “I know your poverty”

- ◆ The word for “poverty” (PTOCHEIAN) means:
- ◆ “Destitute and beggarly because of being robbed of all your goods”.

(In Other Words)

(Pg. 2 of 4)

- ◆ Rome had passed a law that required every citizen to be loyal to the state first.
- ◆ Citizens were required to proclaim their loyalty once a year.
- ◆ You were required to appear before local government officials and make the statement “Caesar Is Lord”.
- ◆ This is why believers were suffering loss; they chose to be poor in personal goods (but rich towards God).

(It Is 2 Choices In Life)

- #1. Rich towards self (and poor towards God), or
- #2. Rich towards God (and poor towards self).
- #3. When you bear up under personal slander
(V. 9) “...I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of satan”.
 - ◆ The word “blasphemy” means “slander”.
 - ◆ Slander means: “to speak evil of someone” (It means:)

- | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| 1. To ridicule | 4. To accuse | 7. To tear down |
| 2. To lie | 5. To criticize | 8. To discredit |
| 3. To spread rumors | 6. To murmur | 9. To talk evil about |

- ◆ The slander here came from the Jews of the city,
- ◆ They used their tongues to stir up trouble and turn people against other people.
- Question:** Have you ever done that (talked about someone behind their back)?
- Question:** Has anyone ever done that to you, (talked despairingly behind your back)?
Jesus said this kind of activity is born of (or from who)?
- Answer:** “The synagogue of satan”

(2 Cautions To Us All)

- #1. Refuse to ever yield your tongue to slander which is from satan (no one has the right to gossip, whisper, slander or share evil reports).
 - ◆ Psalm 101:5: “Whosoever privately slanders his neighbor, him will I cut off”.
 - ◆ Proverbs 10:18: “He that hides hatred with lying lips, and he that utters a slander is a fool”.
- #1 - Refuse to slander anyone behind their back,
- #2 - Refuse to waste your time defending yourself when someone slanders (or speaks evil) of you.
 - ◆ Proverbs 26:2: “The causeless curse against you shall not harm you”.
 - ◆ Proverbs 19:11: “The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression”.
 - ◆ Psalm 7:15,16: “He made a pit and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made. His mischief shall return upon his own head”. **(In Other Words)**
 - ◆ Answer your critics with your life instead of your words!
 - ◆ Refuse to strike the second blow!
 - ◆ Let God defend what is worth defending!
 - ◆ Give people what they need, not what they deserve!

II. The Counsel That Protects You In (V. 10)

“Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days; be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life” (v. 10)

Question: What counsel does Jesus give that protects all of us in the journey?

#1. Don't Fear

“Fear none of the things that you may suffer”

Question: How can you not fear when facing pressure and persecution?

Answer: By remembering Jesus' words in (v. 8):

#1. He is first and last (in charge and over all that touches you)

#2. He was dead but now alive (to enable and strengthen you to stand firm in opposition).

#2. Expect Friction

“...Ye may be tried”

- ◆ Testing may be for “Ten days”.
- ◆ “Ten days” refers to a brief time span,
- ◆ It means, that in light of eternity, all affliction down here on earth is brief.
- ◆ It is only for a moment and all of us will pass through victoriously.

#3. Remain Faithful

“...Be thou faithful unto death” (v. 10)

Question: What is the command of Jesus?

Answer: “Be faithful till the end”.

Question: What does it mean to be faithful unto death?

Answer: It means to be faithful, even if it means to pay with your life.

- ◆ After Revelation was written Polyacarp assumed the office of bishop in the church in Smyrna.
- ◆ He pastored the church for many years and died a martyrs death.
- ◆ When demanded by the heathen judges to deny his faith and recant his testimony, he replied:

“Four score and six years have I served the Lord, and He never wronged me; How then can I blaspheme my King and Savior?”

III. The Crown That Awaits You In (V.11)

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death”. (v. 11)

- ◆ In (v. 10) the crown of life is the reward of eternal life.
- ◆ It is living with Jesus forever and knowing each other as we are known.

Question: Pastor, is it really that important to be faithful to God no matter what?

Answer: “He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death”.

(What Is The Second Death?)

- #1. The first death is the death of the body which everyone (believers and non believers) must suffer.
- #2. The second death is the lake of fire, or hell for eternity apart from the presence of God.

(In Other Words)

- ◆ Believers may have to pass through physical death, (but will never go through the second death)

(Revelation 20:14)

“And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire; This is the second death”

(Revelation 21:8)

“Unbelievers shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death”.

Conclusion

Question: Are you one of the believers or unbelievers?

Question: Are you willing to be faithful unto death?

Question: Are you willing to bear up under afflictions, bear up under personal loss, bear up under personal slander?

Question: Are you willing to take a stand and accept any ridicule (regardless) for your testimony and the name of the Lord?

AMEN!
Bill Kirk, Pastor