

What If Jesus Wrote This Church A Letter?

Smyrna: The Persecuted Church

(Revelation 2:8-11)

- Introduction:
1. What if Jesus were to write us a letter today, and ask a messenger to deliver and read it to us?
 2. What do you think he would say?
 3. Let's examine what he said to some of our early brethren and learn from them. He who ears to hear, let him hear (Rev. 2:7,11,17,29; 3:6,13,22).

I. Background to the Text

- A. The church at Smyrna was about to face persecution.
 1. (Revelation 2:9-10).
 2. Persecution is inevitable (2 Timothy 3:12).
 3. Persecution is not without purpose (1 Peter 5:10).
 4. For the Christian, there is no such thing as meaningless suffering.
- B. We don't have information as to how the church was planted in Smyrna, but we do know that because of Paul's ministry, all Asia heard the gospel (Acts 19:10).
- C. The city was known for idolatry, having temples for Zeus, Apollo, Aphrodite, and as well as Caesar.

II. Jesus' Assessment

- A. Jesus Identifies Himself (Revelation 2:8).
 1. "The first and the last" (Isaiah 44:6; 48:12; Revelation 22:13).
 2. "The one who was dead and came to life" (Matthew 16:18).
- B. The Lord's Commendation (Revelation 2:9-10).
 1. Jesus saw their true condition.
 - a. Thought to be poor, but they were rich (Revelation 2:9).
 - b. Poverty/Riches are not spiritual markers.
 2. Jesus encouraged them in their impending tribulation (Revelation 2:9-10).
 - a. They were opposed by (Emperor Worship, Paganism, Judaism).
 - b. Be faithful "until" (as far as) death.
 - c. (Psalm 56:11).
- C. Notice The Lord Gave No Correction.
 1. They weren't perfect (Romans 3:9-10,23).
 2. Is there a lesson to learn about balance?

- Conclusion:
1. He who has an ear, let him hear!
 2. May God help us to be as faithful, and to walk in the footsteps of some of our early brothers and sisters in Christ.
 3. Also, let us not take for granted that for which others paid with their lives.