

I've Written You a Letter... Jesus

REVELATION CHAPTERS 2 & 3

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Smyrna...The Church Rich in Spirit Suffers Persecution...Revelation 2:8-11

"Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will also keep yours." ~ John 15:20

Words of Wisdom

• *"God does not require that we be successful only that we be faithful." ~Mother Teresa*

• *"Suffering is unbearable if you aren't certain that God is for you and with you." ~ Tim Keller*

MAIN POINT:

The poverty of the Christians at Smyrna was extensive; they were economically destitute similar to many churches across the world today, yet Jesus says they were spiritually rich (v. 2:9). "Listen, My beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which He has promised to those who love Him? ...James 2:5, (ESV)

What can we learn from this...?

1. How does the Letter to the Church of Ephesus (Taught by Troy Last Week) share a similar structure to this letter?

2. Jesus describes Himself to the church as "the first and the last, who died and came to life."

◆ Why would this description be particularly meaningful to the church in Smyrna?

◆ Read *Matthew 10:28-33* to help answer the question.

3. What does He mean when He refers to their being "rich in the midst of poverty"?

◆ How does *2Corinthians 6:10* and *James 2:5* shed light on this?

Bringing it a little closer to home...

4. How would these verses encourage you in the midst of tough times?

Group Discussion

1. How are you rich in your faith?
2. Which attributes of God most comfort you in the midst of trials and why?
3. Have you experienced suffering in your life where it was difficult for a time to stand firm?
 - How did you handle the situation?
4. Most of us don't compromise in our faith. Yet, we compromise for far less than that. In which areas of life do you think Christian men most feel the pressure to compromise, and where does that pressure come from?

Around the world, we have brothers and sisters who are suffering physically, emotionally, economically, and relationally because of their faith in Jesus.

Take some time tonight to pray for the churches in countries you know of that are being persecuted...

Prayer

Take a few moments to share any Prayer Requests with the men in your Group. Write down any requests and commit to pray for one another throughout the week.

(It's great to know that other guys are praying for the important things in your life...and it's great to be praying for the important things in their lives!)

How do the **5 Principles for the Christian Man**, help equip you to apply this to your life?

Discuss your answer with your group...

- Prayer (*Relationship*)
- God's Word (*Knowledge and Understanding*)
- Worship (*Adoration*)
- Fellowship (*Encouragement and Accountability*)
- Service (*Caring for Others, Action to your Belief*)