

JESUS' LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES
LETTER 2 | THE CHURCH AT SMYRNA: THE PERSECUTED CHURCH
REVELATION 2:8-11 | 27 SEPTEMBER 2009
2ND STREET COMMUNITY CHURCH
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How easy it is to dwell on our problems and our circumstances and moan about the demands placed on us because of our faith, and the trials we're going through. And then we come to a passage like this second of the seven letters Jesus wrote to the churches in Asia Minor ... the letter to the **CHURCH AT SMYRNA** ... and it helps us regain some perspective about our own lives and whatever we're going through. Because the saying is true ... **"I complained that I had no shoes, until I saw a man who had no feet."**

Jesus wrote the seven letters found in **REVELATION 2-3**. But He sent them through the pen of John –who was nearing 100 years old at the time He was Jesus' scribe on this **REVELATION** project, and he was living nearly all alone, as a prisoner in exile on Patmos ... a small Greek Island 13 miles square in the Aegean Sea Rome that the Romans used as a penitentiary.



If you visit Patmos today you'll find a cave the locals believe is the exact place where the Apostle John received this **REVELATION** from God ... a cave they've called *The Cave Of The Apocalypse*. Here's what the entrance to this cave looks like.

Jesus identifies Himself as the author of each of these seven letters in the first or second verse. And He uses names for Himself which were also used by the Apostle John to identify Him as the central character of this book in **REVELATION 1**.

REVELATION 2:8 (NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE)

⁸ **"And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life, says this:**

So, when Jesus says in **v. 8**, **"The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life"** ... you can go to **REVELATION 1** and read where John wrote ... **"I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive."**

As I said a couple of weeks ago now when we looking into the first of these letters ... each of Jesus' seven letters in **REVELATION 2-3** contains several common elements ...

- **Each church receives a *COMMENDATION*, which is information about what they're doing right.**

- **Five churches receive *CRITICISM* –except for Smyrna and Philadelphia.**
- **Each church receives *CORRECTION*. Jesus always follows *CRITICISM* with *CORRECTION*. He speaks the Truth in love and then builds us up. And He brings us this *CORRECTION* to tell us how to make the changes we need to make to come more in line with the character of Jesus Christ and the will of God.**
- **Each church receives a *PROMISE* or a *COMMENDATION* near the end of its letter. And the *PROMISE* was the fruit Jesus promised each church that it would experience, as it was obedient to Him.**
- **And finally, each letter is closed with the same *ADMONITION* ... “He who has an ear, let him listen to what the Spirit is saying.” In other words Jesus said, “I get the last word on this, so listen up and don’t argue with Me.”**

Again, Smyrna is in what in *New Testament* times was called “Asia Minor”, but in what is now modern-day Turkey. Here’s a map of where the seven churches were located.

The church in Smyrna –often referred to as *The Persecuted Church* –was begun between 90-95 A.D. So when it received this letter from Jesus, it was a newly planted flock. Let me give you a little background about what was going on during in the life of the Early Church during this period of time.

Nero was Caesar from about 54-68 A.D. and during his reign and the reigns of the next nine Roman emperors –up through 304 A.D. about 550,000 Christians were put to death for their faith –or approximately 5% of the world’s population of Christians during those first three centuries. When we compare how many Christians there were in the world then, to how many Christians there are in the world today, this number is staggering ... because that 550,000 Christian martyrs in the first three centuries of the Early Church, from 54-304 A.D. would equal nearly 25 million dead today.

UK Christian Patrick Johnstone, author of *Operation World*, the most accurate abstract of Christian statistics, offers the following information about where the heaviest Christian persecution has come from over the past 20 centuries. I’ve had an ongoing email conversation with Patrick during the past couple of weeks, and these statistics are from a highly graphical book he’s been writing that will be published in the next 18 months, entitled *The Future Of The Worldwide Church: Possibilities For 21st Century Ministry*.

An estimated 70,000,000+ Christians have been martyred since 30 AD. And so 2nd Century Early Church historian Tertullian's famous quote is valid, when he wrote that “**The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.**”

<u>CENTURIES</u>	<u>PRIMARY PERSECUTOR</u>	<u>ESTIMATED # OF MARTYRS</u>
1-4	Roman	550,000
5-7	Persian (Babylonia/Iran)	875,000
8-12	Muslim	551,000
13	Mongols	7,517,000

14-15	Muslim	11,600,00
16	Catholics	3,900,000
17-19	Buddhists	2,550,000
20	Communists	41,320,000

Martyrdom and the growth of the Church often go hand-in-hand. In places where there is great martyrdom, the church usually experiences great growth as well. But this isn't always true. Especially when you look at the near extinction of Christianity from Central Asia and China, in the 13-15th centuries, when over 15 million Christians were put to death by Muslims and Mongols.

All this to say, that Christians persecution during the past 2,000 years has been extraordinarily heavy. And this letter Jesus had the Apostle John write and deliver to the Christians in Smyrna, told them that even though they'd known persecution, it was going to get worse. Perhaps the best analogy to what Believers in the Early Church were forced to endure would be the experience of the Jews during WWII.

- **Their travel was restricted and their livelihood was destroyed.**
- **Their shops were subject to frequent vandalism and looting.**
- **Their synagogues were defiled or destroyed, and their property seized.**
- **They were humiliated, stigmatized, harassed and physically assaulted. And eventually, their lives and the lives of their families were taken.**

In the United States we obviously haven't seen this kind of martyrdom. But travel to Central and South America, to China, to the former Eastern Block countries ... go to Africa, and to the former USSR ... and to places like Tibet, Nepal, Indonesia, and Thailand ... and to many other places around the world, and martyrs are common. Men and women, old and young, people of every race and nationality, who have chosen to die rather than to give up their faith in Jesus Christ.

In the classic books *Fox's Book of Martyrs* and *Twentieth Century Martyrs*, and then in the series of modern books called *Jesus Freaks | Volumes I & II*, you can read about Christian martyrs around the world right up until the early part of the first decade of the 21st Century. And if you visit the website www.persecution.com, the ministry site for a ministry called *The Voice Of The Martyrs*, you can read about Christians all over the world who are dying, right up to today for their faith in Jesus Christ.

Webster's Dictionary says this about the word **persecute**: **“to harass in a manner to injure, grieve or afflict; to cause to suffer because of belief; to annoy with persistent or urgent approaches.”**

There are all kinds of **persecution**, but when I think of the kind that takes place in the USA, I think less of burnings and tortures ... and I think more about the persistent and urgent realities of sins like lust, power, greed, arrogance, and jealousy.

Persecution is anything Satan uses to lure you and me as followers of Jesus Christ into denying the Lordship of Christ in our lives.

The city of **Smyrna** was founded by Alexander the Great near the Aegean Sea in what is now Turkey. The word **Smyrna** means **“bitter”** and is related to the word **“myrrh”**. **Myrrh** was the gummy, sticky resin of a shrubby-like tree that's bitter when it's

first extracted, but which becomes beautiful smelling when it's crushed. So **Smyrna** was a fitting name for the home of this 1st Century church because even as it was **pierced, afflicted, and crushed**, it gave off a fragrance of Jesus Christ.

Smyrna was a center of Emperor worship. If you called Caesar '**Lord**,' you lived. But if you chose to call Jesus Christ '**LORD**,' you were killed. Remember that these seven letters were written sometime between 95-96 A.D., and so for about 60 years, since Jesus' death and resurrection, the Early Church had been under pressure to worship whomever the emperor was at the time. And Romans were hostile towards Christians because when Caesar Nero burned Rome to the ground, he blamed the Christians.

So as we look deeper into the church at Smyrna, let's also look deeper into our own lives, and into the ways we're each tempted to turn away from our relationship with Jesus, and live according to our own desires. And let's ask ourselves ...

Am I serving God or myself? Or like Isaiah asked, am I "honoring God with my lips, but turning my heart away from Him"? (ISAIAH 29:13)

In **Hebrews 11** we see the lives of men and women who stood for faith in the midst of incredible persecution and opposition. And **vv. 35b-40** speaks both, *historically* of *Old Testament* days, and *prophetically* of what would happen soon in Smyrna ...

HEBREWS 11:35b-40 (NEW CENTURY VERSION)

^{35b} **Other [followers of God] were tortured and refused to accept their freedom so they could be raised from the dead to a better life.**

³⁶ **Some were laughed at and beaten. Others were put in chains and thrown into prison.**

³⁷ **They were stoned to death, they were cut in half, and they were killed with swords. Some wore the skins of sheep and goats. They were poor, abused, and treated badly.**

³⁸ **The world was not good enough for them! They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and holes in the earth.**

³⁹ **All these people are known for their faith, but none of them received what God had promised.**

⁴⁰ **God planned to give us something better so that they would be made perfect, but only together with us.**

When we read about these things we can hardly believe them. But they happened — and they're still happening today.

ILLUSTRATION ... While in seminary from 1980-1984, I had a schoolmate and friend named Harry Lee. He was from China and had spent 28 years in prison because he was a follower of Jesus Christ. Christians were horribly persecuted in China in the 1930s through the 1950s. And Harry was one of those Christians. 22 years in solitary confinement. And Jesus kept Harry's mind sane and his heart focused on Him.

And we feel *persecuted*, or at the very least *deprived*, when we don't have new Nikes or a new iPod. And yet we have running water, and a bed, a pillow, and most of us have a car. And in the midst of the reality of life and death in the Church at Smyrna, and in countless other *New Testament Churches*, and in the reality of Christian persecution and martyrdom around the world today ... you and I are brutally reminded of our self-centeredness. So remember, within the context of our experience today ...

Persecution is anything Satan uses to lure you and me as followers of Jesus Christ into denying the Lordship of Christ in our lives.

REVELATION 2:8 (NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE)

⁸ “And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life, says this:

Again, like in the letter to the Church at Ephesus, Jesus identifies Himself as the author of this letter and says that He's sending it to them through the “**angel**”, which means the “**messenger**” or the “**pastor**”, of the Church. And Jesus describes His character when He says, “**the first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life.**” In *CREATION* and *SALVATION*, Jesus had the *FIRST WORD*. And when it comes to *JUDGMENT* Jesus will have the *LAST WORD*.

REVELATION 2:9 (NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE)

⁹ ‘I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

Smyrna was a wealthy city. But because when a person became a Christian, they lost their job and more than likely couldn't get another one, the cost of following Jesus was a lot higher than it is for us today in Oregon. And in the midst of this reality, Jesus said to His followers in Smyrna, “**You're not rich *financially*, but you're rich *spiritually* ... you're rich in Me, and in the treasures of heaven.**”

Jesus looks at our lives and sees what we can't see. And He says to us “**I see beyond the obvious, and I want to give you the same kind of sight. I have a future and a hope for you. I know it looks hopeless right now ... but hang in there with Me.**”

But **v. 9** tells us that there were people in Smyrna who weren't willing to stand by Jesus no matter what. And Jesus says these people were **blasphemers** and part of “**Satan's church.**” In other words, during suffering, they'd given into Satan's lies instead of clinging onto God's love and purposes. But let me tell you the story of a man in Smyrna who wasn't a **blasphemer**.

Fifty years from when this letter was written, the pastor at Smyrna would be a man named Polycarp. As a young man, Polycarp was a disciple of the then very old Apostle John. On February 23, 155 A.D., there was an Olympiad sporting event in Smyrna and the fans went wild. They began shouting, “**Death to the infidels and search for Polycarp.**” And as the crowd chanted, Roman soldiers went looking for Polycarp. His family tried to hide him, but the night before, God had spoken to Polycarp about this in a dream and he told his family, “**Tomorrow I must be burned at the stake.**”

At 86 years of age, Polycarp knew full well the contents of this letter, because he was in his mid-30's and one of the young men who made up the church at Smyrna when it arrived around 50 years before. And on this day, as people called out for his death, Polycarp knew that he was going to have to stand up and be counted publicly as a committed follower of Jesus Christ.

Eventually Polycarp was found and delivered to the mob in the arena. Several people wanted to nail his hands and feet to a stake to keep him from struggling. But Polycarp said, "**Put away those nails and let me be!**" And they obediently laid down their hammers and their nails. Then the soldiers said, "**Polycarp, you're an old man, just say you love Caesar over Jesus and you won't die.**" And Polycarp replied ...

Eighty-six years have I served the LORD, and He has been faithful to me. How can I now be *faithless* to Him and blaspheme His name? The One who gives me strength to endure the flames will give me strength to not flinch at the stake. You threaten me with fire that burns only for an hour, but you are in danger of a fire which will burn forever.

And as the wood was piled around Polycarp's feet and ignited, it's written by the Early Church fathers that he stood there freely ... unnailed, and unteathered to the stake. And he looked upward to heaven and said ...

O LORD God Almighty, Father of the blessed and beloved Son, Jesus Christ, I thank You for giving me this day and this hour, that I may be numbered among Your martyrs, to share the cup of Jesus and to rise again to life everlasting.

And so the church at Smyrna, right when this letter was received around 95-96 A.D., and then on for more than two more centuries, was being crushed, bruised, and taken through hardships that you and I cannot imagine. But ***THROUGH THEIR SUFFERING*** back then, and ***THROUGH THE REALITY OF OUR TRIBULATIONS*** today, God has always had it on His heart to bring His followers to a place of focus and healing, knowing that whatever lies our circumstances might be shouting out, that He is God.

REVELATION 2:10a (NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE)

^{10a} **Do not fear what you are about to suffer ...**

Do not fear. This sentence, and all its variations (**Do not be afraid. Fear not**), is the most repeated phrase in the Bible. And Jesus' command to "**not fear**" is in the ***PRESENT IMPERATIVE ACTIVE TENSE***—meaning that Jesus is saying, "**Stop doing this and don't ever start up again!**" Jesus is asking the people at Smyrna, and you and me as His followers today to change our whole mind-set, and to be on the lookout for those things that would nudge us to take our eyes off of Him and give into fear.

God is the author of love, not fear. And **FIRST JOHN 4:18** tells us that **perfect love casts out fear**. And so when we really love Jesus Christ and we're walking with Him, and He's number one priority in our lives, then ***WHO OR WHAT*** can we fear?

Suffering is a certainty for every Christian. In fact, the Apostle Paul wrote in **PHILIPPIANS 1:27-30** that it's **a sign of our salvation**. Before we're in a relationship

with Jesus Christ, Satan doesn't have to try and get us to deny Christ because we follow our flesh, and jump into sin with both feet. But listen to me: After we come into a relationship with Jesus, how we travel through suffering, trials, and persecution is a sign of our solidarity with Christ, and our maturity in Christ. But **v. 10** goes on to reveal Christ's **COMMENDATION** to the Church at Smyrna, and to you and me as His followers today ...

REVELATION 2:10b (NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE)

^{10b} Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

The **ten days** spoken of may be a prophetic word, correlating with the ten emperors who persecuted the Early Church from 54-304 A.D. But whatever it represents, Jesus **COMMENDATION** offers speaks to His faithfulness, in that the **crown of life** will be given to all those who are martyred for their faith in Him ... and to all those who don't take their eyes off of Him in the midst of persecution ... and to all of us who don't give into Satan's schemes to get us to **deny the Lordship of Jesus Christ in our lives.**

REVELATION 2:11 (NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE)

¹¹ 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.'

In **v. 11** we find the **PROMISE** Jesus has for the church at Smyrna and for you and me today. The "**second death**" is the "**lake of fire**" spoken of in **REVELATION 20:14**. And God **PROMISES** that if we stand with Him in our times of persecution ... if we **overcome** and are faithful to the end ... we won't spent eternity apart from God.

NEWS FLASH! It costs us to be on the road to becoming dedicated, maturing, faithful followers of Jesus Christ. And without a doubt, in some times and places throughout history it costs more than others. But as End Times pressures increase, the persecution of Christians will also increase; and that's why, as God's people, we need to be ready (cf., **FIRST PETER 4:12ff**).

Because, while our experience with persecution is different from the people in Smyrna, or different from other Christians around the world today ... that doesn't mean we should just throw our heads back and shout out, "**Praise the LORD I wasn't living then and there!**" No way! To us Jesus says, "**To those of you who have ears, listen to what the Spirit is saying through the WORD of God today.**" Remember the definition of **persecution** we're using as we study this letter to Smyrna?

Persecution is anything Satan uses to lure you and me as followers of Jesus Christ into denying the Lordship of Christ in our lives.

And as I've been studying these four verses this past week, God asked me a question.

"Gregg, in the midst of the persecution you go through, in the midst of the circumstances in your life that call you to choose whether I AM

the LORD of your life, or YOU ARE the LORD of your life, which Old Testament prophet are you more like, Jeremiah or Jonah?”

Consider the differences between these two men with me as we wrap up this morning’s teaching ...

JEREMIAH AND JONAH WERE BOTH CALLED BY GOD TO BE PROPHETS, AND BOTH WERE INITIALLY RELUCTANT. In **JEREMIAH 1:6**, he said, “Oh Lord, I can’t speak. I’m just a young guy.” Jeremiah was hesitant because of his **INADEQUACIES**.

But it wasn’t because of **INSECURITY** that Jonah was hesitant to accept God’s call. It was because of **HOSTILITY**. “I’m not going to Nineveh” Jonah said. You see, Jonah had heard all about the brutal Ninevites. They’d attack other nations, cut off people’s heads, and plant them on spears around their fallen cities as a warning to others to not get in their way. And so, when God told Jonah to go to Nineveh, the capital city of Assyria, Jonah said in anger “**No way!**”

JEREMIAH AND JONAH WERE BOTH FEARFUL TO OBEY GOD’S CALL ON THEIR LIVES. God sent Jeremiah, primarily to Jerusalem ... **THE SPIRITUAL CAPITAL OF THE KNOWN WORLD**. And God sent Jonah to Nineveh, **THE POLITICAL CAPITAL OF THE KNOWN WORLD**.

Once Jeremiah arrived in Jerusalem, you couldn’t get him **OUT OF** the city. During the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. King Nebuchadnezzar came to Jeremiah and said, “**We know you’re a prophet. You can live anywhere in the empire you want. We’ll protect you.**” But Jeremiah responded, “**I’m staying here with my people.**”

And on the other hand, you couldn’t get Jonah **INTO** the city of Nineveh. He headed off in the other direction, towards a town called Tarshish.

JEREMIAH AND JONAH WERE BOTH SEPARATED FROM THEIR FAMILIES. Jeremiah was **SEPARATED EMOTIONALLY**, as everybody he knew rejected him and conspired against him following his obedience to God. And Jonah was **SEPARATED PHYSICALLY** from his family while he was on a voyage away from Nineveh.

JEREMIAH AND JONAH WERE BOTH PHYSICALLY ABUSED. Jeremiah was brutalized throughout his life, as he was beaten and put into stocks. And when the sailors on the boat that Jonah was on as a passenger realized he was representing the True and Living God, even though they were hesitant at first, finally, at Jonah’s insistence, they threw him overboard and into the sea.

JEREMIAH AND JONAH BOTH FOUND THEMSELVES IN A PIT ... literally. Jeremiah was thrown into a deep, muddy, abandoned well, where he sank into the mire. And Jonah was in a pit too ... but it wasn’t an abandoned well ... it was the digestive tract of a huge fish. If it was a *whale* –as some speculate, the temperature in that stomach was 98.6 degrees. Waist-deep in hot seaweed, stewing in stomach acid. Fish smacking him on the head as they came down the whale’s throat.

JEREMIAH AND JONAH WERE BOTH DELIVERED FROM THEIR PITS. Jeremiah by the hands of men ... Ebed-melech came on the scene and took him out of the well. And Jonah was barfed out of the pit of the fish by the command of God.

JEREMIAH AND JONAH BOTH SPOKE FOR GOD. Jeremiah ministered with many different teachings in and around Jerusalem. And Jonah's teaching only had one sentence ... "**40 days and then destruction is coming.**" But as they shared their messages, **JEREMIAH WAS FAITHFUL FOR 40 YEARS**, and **JONAH WAS GRUDGINGLY FAITHFUL FOR 40 DAYS**, complaining and moaning every step of the way.

And what kind of fruit did Jeremiah see for his 40 years of faithfulness to the calling of God on his life? All he basically saw was people rejecting God, rejecting him, and refusing to repent. And Jonah, what did he see? Man, this guy was a superstar! The greatest revival in the history of the church ... 600,000 people coming into relationship with God in 40 days. No matter how you slice it, that's solid church growth. But the stories of Jeremiah and Jonah go on.

JEREMIAH AND JONAH BOTH LEFT THEIR CITIES. Eventually we see Jeremiah on a hillside outside Jerusalem and Jonah on a hillside outside Nineveh. Jeremiah is in agony that God's message was rejected. And Jonah was asking God to change His mind, take back the salvation He'd given the Ninevites, and annihilate them.

JEREMIAH AND JONAH BOTH CRIED. And in the end we see both men crying. Jeremiah was weeping **out of his gourd**. And if you know the story of Jonah, then you know that he was weeping **because of his gourd**. Jeremiah was broken, concerned, and compassionate. And it seemed like Jonah couldn't have cared less. In fact, he was ticked off. **JEREMIAH WAS THE WEeping PROPHEt. JONAH WAS THE WINING PROPHEt.**

And the question God asked me this past week, and that I'm asking you this morning is this: In the midst of the persecution you go through ... in the middle of the circumstances in your life that call you to choose whether JESUS is the LORD of your life or YOU ARE the LORD of your life, which Old Testament prophet are you more like, Jeremiah or Jonah?"

Jeremiah, by the world's standards, would have been labeled a total **WASHOUT**. And Jonah would have been a Christian mega-star. "Did you hear that guy?! 600,000 converts ... we've got to get him to speak at our church!" But then what happened?

500 years later, Jesus stepped out of heaven, and into the world. And when He asked His disciples in **MATTHEW 16**, "**Who are people saying I am?**", they replied, "**Many people think You're Jeremiah.**" But nobody said, "**People think You're Jonah.**"

Gang, when Jesus Christ comes back again, there's going to be a lot of surprises. Many Christ-followers, who are laboring away faithfully for His name sake ... men and women who are feeling the rejection of others, and who aren't seeing a whole lot of measurable fruit or success, will hear Jesus say what He wrote to His followers in Smyrna, "**Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into your rest. OTHERS SAY you're poor. BUT I SAY to you, that because of your faithfulness, you're rich.**"

So my encouragement to each of us this morning is to hang in there. No matter what you're going through. Like Jesus tells the Christ-followers at the Church of Smyrna ... "**be faithful until death, and He will give you the crown of life.**" Keep eternity's values in view. Be a Jeremiah. Should Jesus tarry in His return, may history look

back on you and me, and at how we chose to live our lives in faithfulness to Jesus Christ, at how we didn't deny Him the right, as the Lord of our lives, to tell us how to live ... and may they speak these words about us ...

“They were Christians who were faithful despite persecution. They had sin and suffering knocking at their door just as often as the next person. But they hung in there with Jesus even when the going got tough. And they refused to let the tribulations of life get their eyes off the absolute Lordship of Jesus in their life.”

God wants to **REDEEM** and **MAKE NEW** the bitter things in our lives. And out of our **crushing** and out of our **pain** ... like the myrrh found near Smyrna ... God wants to smell a beautiful aroma arise out of us. He wants us to move beyond complaining ... and into His mind. Knowing that *our* perspective is often short sighted and selfish.

ROMANS 5:3-5 (THE MESSAGE)

³⁻⁵ ... We continue to shout our praise even when we're hemmed in with troubles, because we know how troubles can develop passionate patience in us, and how that patience in turn forges the tempered steel of virtue, keeping us alert for whatever God will do next. In alert expectancy such as this, we're never left feeling shortchanged. Quite the contrary - we can't round up enough containers to hold everything God generously pours into our lives through the Holy Spirit!

May God help us to be like **Polycarp**, and like **Jeremiah**, and like the Christians in **Smyrna**. And may God help us most of all to be Jesus-like. Who, **“for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame.”**

As we go from here today, Jesus is saying to us as the flock called 2nd Street, **“I know what you're going through ... I suffered too. And I know what it's coming to ... I rose again, and so will you. And as you're *faithful*, you'll receive the crown of abundant life at the end of the race. And don't let anything lure you away of allowing me to be the Lord of your life. Trust Me. I know you the best, and I love you the most.”**

NEXT SUNDAY | THE CHURCH AT PERGAMUM –THE FALSE TEACHING CHURCH | REVELATION 2:12-17. COME PRAYING AND EXPECTING!

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