

Revelation 2:8-11 A Word To The Suffering

Jesus sends out seven letters to seven churches, but none so tender as the letter to those at Smyrna. They were suffering and Jesus meets them where they are at with a word of encouragement.

Topic- Suffering, Encouragement

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*Polycarp- "Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He has done me no wrong. How then can I blaspheme my King who saved me?"

*Poly2- "You threaten me with fire that burns for an hour and is soon quenched. But you do not know of the fire of the coming judgment and eternal punishment, reserved for the ungodly. Why do you delay? Bring what you will."

*Poly3- "Leave me as I am; He who gives me strength to endure the fire will also grant me to remain unmoved on the pyre

*Poly4- "O Lord God Almighty, Father of Thy beloved and blessed Son Jesus Christ... I thank Thee that Thou hast counted me worthy, this day and this hour, to share in the cup of Thy Christ."

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*Tertullian- The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church. (40yr later)

*Rogers- The Church persecuted is the Church pure, and the Church pure is the Church powerful

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"These things says the First and the Last"

Isaiah 41:4 — Who has performed and done it, Calling the generations from the beginning? 'I, the LORD, am the first; And with the last I am He.'

Isaiah 44:6 — "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God.

Isaiah 43:10b — "...understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, Nor shall there be after Me."

Our God Is:

- Omnipotent (All Powerful)
- Omnipresent (In All Places)
- Omniscient (All knowing)

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“who was dead, and came to life”

“who was [made] dead, and came [back] to life”

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“I know” = eidō(εἶδω); to know (281x), to see(314x)

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tribulation = thlipsis(θλίψις); tribulation (21x), affliction (17x), trouble (3x), anguish (1x), persecution (1x); Lit. a pressing, pressing together, pressure

-Latin = tribulum; the tribulum (also known as a “threshing sledge”) is an ancient agricultural tool from the Mediterranean region, consisting of a wooden board or raft studded with sharp flint or iron teeth, which was dragged by animals over a threshing floor to separate grain from the straw and chaff of harvested crops.

****Tribulum**

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“poverty (but you are rich)”

Poverty = ptōcheia(πτωχεία); 3x; Greek Penia = poor. Ptōcheia = has absolutely nothing.

“America is the hardest place on earth to be a Christian.”

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Blasphemy (blasphēmia)can be literal or simply slander.

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“Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer.... Be faithful until death...”

No promise of escape

*Luther “They gave our Master a crown of thorns. Why do we hope for a crown of roses?”

*Augustine- “God had one Son on earth without sin, but never one without suffering.”

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“I know... I see...”

Our Great High (& Empathetic) Priest

Hebrews 4:14-15 — Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

-For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Born in Poverty — Luke 2:7 & 2:22–24

-Born During Political Turmoil — Matthew 2:16–18

-Raised Under Oppression — Luke 20:22–25 & John 11:48

-Lived in an Ethnically & Politically Polarized Society — John 4:9 & Acts 23:6–8

-Lived in a Poor, Small Town (Nazareth) — John 1:46

-Hometown Rejection — Luke 4:28–30

-Not Physically Attractive — Isaiah 53:2

Social Stigma of Illegitimacy — John 8:41

-Misunderstood by Parents — Luke 2:48–50

-Loss of a Parent (Joseph) — John 19:26–27

Hard Laborer’s Life — Mark 6:3

-Family Rejection — Mark 3:21 & John 7:5

-Loss of Family (John the Baptist) — Matthew 14:10–13

-No Home of His Own — Luke 9:58

Physical Weariness — John 4:6

-Compassion Fatigue — Matthew 14:14

-Extreme Hunger — Matthew 4:2

-Constant Demands of Others — Mark 3:9–10

-No Time to Rest — Mark 6:31

-False Accusations — Mark 14:55–59

-Mocked — Matthew 27:27–31 & Psalm 22:6–7

-Publicly Shamed — Matthew 27:35

-Despised and Rejected by the Masses — John 6:66 & Isaiah 53:3

Temptation & Spiritual Warfare — Matthew 4:1–11

Dealt With A Corrupt Justice System — Luke 23:14–15

- Plotted Against by Leaders — John 11:53 & Psalm 2:1–2
- Abandoned by Companions — Mark 14:50
- Betrayed by a Friend — Luke 22:48
- Denied by His Closest Friend — Luke 22:61
- Let Down by Friends In A Time of Great Need — Matthew 26:40–41
- Death of a Friend (Lazarus) — John 11:35

Feeling of Being Forsaken — Matthew 27:46 & Psalm 22:1

- Deeply Troubled in Spirit — John 12:27 & John 13:21
- Brutal Beating — John 19:1 & Isaiah 50:6
- Suffering & Pain — John 19:18
- The Fear of Facing Death — Matthew 26:39
- He Became Dead — Luke 23:46
- Yet He Came To Life — Luke 24:5-6

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Hebrews 4:15-16 — For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

-Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

1 Peter 5:7 — casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

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*Spurgeon “I have learned to kiss the wave that throws me against the Rock of Ages.”

*Samuel Rutherford - “Whenever I find myself in the cellar of affliction, I always look for the Lord’s choicest wines.

*Elizabeth Elliot- “God will not protect you from anything that will make you more like Jesus.”

Philippians 4:11-13 — ...I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

-I can “do” = ischyō; “to have the strength needed to overcome”

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**“This hill, though high, I covet to ascend;
The difficulty will not me offend;
For I perceive the way to life lies here:

Come, pluck up, heart; let's neither faint nor fear." — John Bunyan, Pilgrim's Progress

*Corrie Ten Boom

**"Our wise Father in heaven knows when we're going to need things, too. Don't run out ahead of Him, Corrie. When the time comes that some of us will have to die, you will look into your heart and find the strength you need-just in time." Casper Ten Boom

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Revelation 3:8 — "I know your works... you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.