

Message Based Questions 11/8/20

Revelation 2:8-11, Part 6

NOTE: LEADER TIPS ARE PROVIDED ON PAGES 2-3 OF THIS DOCUMENT.

- 1. Take some time to catch up. How did this week go? What steps of obedience did you take and what has God been teaching you?**
- 2. Take time to read Revelation 2:8-11. What stands out to you from the text and/or the message Pastor Rick preached? Was there something you had not noticed before?**
- 3. 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? See Matthew 10:28-33 for help.**
- 4. 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 to pray for the churches in countries you know of that are being persecuted.**
- 5. Most of us don’t compromise in our faith because we are afraid of being killed; we compromise for far less than that. In which areas of life do you think Christians most feel the pressure to compromise? From where does that pressure come?**
- 6. One application from this message is preparing for spiritual battles and fighting for our faith. Where is God in the battles we end up in? See Ephesians 6:10-18 and 2 Chronicles 20.**
- 7. How do you feel led to respond to this week’s message and text? Are there steps of obedience you feel the Spirit asking you to take? How can we pray for you as a group?**

LEADER TIPS FOR REVELATION 2:8-11

1. Take some time to catch up. How did this week go? What steps of obedience did you take and what has God been teaching you?

This question is meant to be a bit of an icebreaker, but it is also meant to give accountability. Last week, if you were following the questions, you would have ended by asking the group how they felt called to respond to the message and text of Scripture. This is an opportunity to check in and see how it went. The hope is that by consistently starting and ending with these questions people will think about these things throughout the week.

2. Take time to read Revelation 2:8-11. What stands out to you from the text and/or the message Pastor Rick preached? Was there something you had not noticed before?

This question serves a couple of purposes. Depending on when your group meets together, a couple of days may have passed since Sunday. Because of this, it is always a good idea to refresh peoples' memories and to get them back in a headspace to talk about the passage that was preached. The text used for the sermon was Revelation 2:8-11. As you read, give everyone a chance to talk about what stood out to them from the text and/or sermon. People can also share if there was something in particular that was laid upon their heart as they reflected on this text. If an important theme comes up that is not covered in the following questions you might consider taking some time to have that discussion right then and there.

3. 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? See Matthew 10:28-33 for help.

This question is meant to get us looking at the text and observing the situation for the church in Smyrna. Jesus warns them that affliction for 10 days. He calls them to be faithful unto death. The threat of violence and death because of faith was a real possibility. The fear of death has plagued the human race throughout history. But, because Jesus has conquered death and reigns forever, those who belong to him have nothing to fear.

Dr. Robert Mounce put it this way, "Since murder is the last resort, what can be done about those who rise from the dead?" Matthew's gospel helps us to put suffering and fear into perspective. Matthew is basically saying, "Don't worry, the worst that they can do is kill you." That would be worth being afraid of, except Jesus is the one who has conquered death.

4. 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 to pray for the churches in countries you know of that are being persecuted.

This question is meant to make us aware that the persecution that Smyrna is experiencing is not a relic of days gone by. In many countries this type of persecution is a reality. For example, the church in China has been under incredible pressure lately as the government cracks down on the church. You could take some time to pray for the church in China. Alternatively, we have people in our church family and community from all around the world. If there are any family or friends of your small group affected by persecution pray for them. You could always do some research online if there is a particular country you want to pray for. Open Doors International publishes the 'world watch list'. This is a list of the 50 countries with the greatest amount of persecution.

5. Most of us don't compromise in our faith because we are afraid of being killed; we compromise for far less than that. In which areas of life do you think Christians most feel the pressure to compromise? From where does that pressure come?

This question is meant to get us thinking about compromise in our own lives. Most of us aren't threatened with death, but that doesn't mean we aren't tempted to compromise in our faith and obedience. The question is phrased the way it is to try and stimulate conversation. People will likely be more open to the hypothetical conversation about where other Christians are tempted to compromise.

Possible answers may be: "I think Christians feel pressure to compromise in the area of sexuality. They feel pressure from the media and Hollywood. Not to mention their friends at work." "I think that Christians most feel pressure to compromise in the area of finances. Times are tough and many people think that if they give their money back to God, there won't be enough for

themselves.” “Christians feel pressure to compromise on what they believe about certain things. There are some things that society no longer sees as acceptable and many Christians are rethinking biblical truths.”

If you get some good discussion going turn the question into a personal one: “In which areas of life do you feel pressure to compromise? Where does that pressure come from?”

6. One application from this message is preparing for spiritual battles and fighting for our faith. Where is God in our battles? See Ephesians 6:10-18 and 2 Chronicles 20.

7. How do you feel led to respond to this week’s message and text? Are there steps of obedience you feel the Spirit asking you to take? How can we pray for you as a group?

This is the ‘what are you going to do about it’ question. It is meant to become very practical. The blessing in the book of Revelation is for those who not only listen to what is written, but observe what is said. For this reason, we always want to talk about how we are going to respond to what we’ve read.