

Where Do We Turn?

Pastor Gary Partridge has sensed the Lord calling him to a new ministry opportunity in Colorado. We rejoice in this new venture that awaits him, but we also mourn the loss of his outstanding leadership in our church.

Where do we turn when our stability as a congregation is rocked? And where do we turn when our own personal stability is suddenly threatened?

The church at Smyrna faced two ongoing problems: First, they were located in a city where the Jewish population was strongly opposed to Christianity. Second, the non-Jewish population was extremely loyal to Rome, and supported emperor worship.

Three Commands and Three Promises from God in Times of Uncertainty:

Command # 1 – Be _____(fearless)!

- a. *“Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer.” Revelation 2:10*
- b. Just as the Lord brought Pastor Cory to us when Pastor Mark left, God will bring Pastor Gary’s successor to us in His timing.

Promise # 1 – The Lord _____(knows) what we are going through!

- a. *“I know your afflictions and your poverty – yet you are rich! I know the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.” Revelation 2:9*
- b. God knows our situation here at AEFC, and He knows all about any personal problems you are encountering.

Command # 2 – Be _____(faithful)!

- a. *“Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life!” Revelation 2:10*
- b. “Be faithful” could be translated “have faith”. Faith is an action word. Noah, Abraham, Joseph, David, and Samuel were all men of faith and of action (Hebrews 11).

Promise # 2 – God is in _____(control)!

- a. *“Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution of ten days.” Revelation 2:10*
- b. *“No temptation has seized you except what is common to man, and God is faithful, he will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you can bear, but with the temptation, he will provide a way of escape so that you can stand up under it.” II Corinthians 10:13*
- c. *“I know the plans I have for you – plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29:11*

Command # 3 – Be a _____(fighter)!

- a. *“He who has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death.” Revelation 2:11*

- b. Every one of the letters to the seven churches includes a call to overcome. What this tells us is that life on this earth will be series of challenges. Overcoming will not be easy!
- c. *“Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” James 1:2-4*

Promise # 3 – Eternal _____(reward)!

- a. *“He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death.” Revelation 2:11*
- b. Natural physical death will happen to very person, unless you are among the one generation of believers who will be rapture! (I Thessalonians 4:16-17)
The second death will only happen to unbelievers, who will be punished with eternal death in hell.
- c. *“If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.” Revelation 20:15*

Please pray daily for three requests over the coming weeks:

1. **Pray for the Lord’s richest blessings to be on Pastor Gary and Amanda as they transition to ministry in Colorado.**
2. **Pray for our church leadership, especially our elders, as they lead our church through this time of transition.**
3. **Pray now for our next Associate Pastor here at AEFC, that God would be preparing his heart, mind, and soul for his new calling.**