

Fear None of Those Things Which Thou Shalt Suffer

Revelation 2:8-17

Please open your Bible to the book of Revelation chapter Two. I would like to read verses eight through seventeen as we look at our Lord's letters to the churches of Smyrna and Pergamos. Revelation chapter two and beginning at verse eight.

As you find your place, I want to take a moment to compel everyone under the sound of my voice to examine your heart. My friends, the day is far spent and many of you are not right with God. Many of you have heard the gospel, but you have not obeyed the gospel. Many of you are neglecting the call of God. The Bible asks a solemn question in the book of Hebrews where we read, *"And how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"*

Sadly, the answer is clearly implied by the question. No one will escape who neglects the call of God to repent. No one will escape who fails to confess the Lord Jesus Christ. No one will escape who fails to trust the Lord Jesus as Savior. No one will escape who refuses to serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

I must warn you today. Jesus is coming and you will be left behind if you refuse to watch and be ready. Furthermore, there is but a step between you and death. Many people of all ages are succumbing to sudden death all around the world. Mortality rates have spiked over the past two years and those rates are not coming down.

Sudden death is shocking the family and friends of those who seem to be healthy but died suddenly and unexpectedly. Here are several headlines I have read recently:

HORROR: Pregnant 26-Year-Old Mother-of-Three Dies Suddenly After "Sudden Cardiac Arrest," Unborn Baby Dead As Well

23-Year-Old Georgia Police Officer Suddenly Dies During Foot Chase

43-Year-Old Tennis Player Dies Suddenly During Match

At least 750,000 people in 38 countries “died suddenly” after COVID vaccination in 2022

Second ABC News Producer Dies Suddenly by Undisclosed Causes

Celebrity Trainer Dies Suddenly at 53 at His Los Angeles Home

I could go on with dozens of headlines I have bookmarked that sadly tell of young and middle aged people dying suddenly, despite being healthy. What about you? Are you ready to meet the Lord? If you die today, do you know heaven is your home? My friends, it is urgent. The hour is growing late. Be not deceived. Hell is the eternal home of all who neglect so great salvation. It is time to get right with God.

May we pray together . . . prayer . . .

Please look with me at verse eight where the Word of God says:

8And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

Jesus Christ is speaking to his church. He is described as the first and the last because he is God from all eternity. You will recall the book of Hebrews teaches the Father prepared him a body. That is, the eternal Word took to himself human nature in the person of Jesus the promised Messiah. As the unique Son of God he could lay down his life for the sin of the world. This he did at the cross as he bore our sins in his body and his soul was made an offering for sin.

Indeed, he was dead. Upon propitiating the wrath of God against the sin of the world, our Savior bowed his head and gave up the ghost. He was dead. His body

lay lifeless for three days and three nights until God raised him from the dead. He was dead, but now is alive forevermore!

Now look at verses nine through eleven:

9I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

10Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

11He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

The church in Smyrna endured great persecution. Jesus assured them he knew of their tribulation, or trouble. May I remind you, our Lord clearly says to his disciples, in this world we will have tribulation. The apostles taught the church the same saying, *“that we must through much tribulation enter the kingdom of God.”* The Apostle Paul warned the church at Thessalonica, teaching them they would suffer tribulation, or trouble, for simply bearing the name of Jesus.

Are you prepared to suffer for his name’s sake? If we ever face a great trial of our faith, Jesus teaches us to *“fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer.”* Rather, we are to be faithful even unto death and Jesus says he will give us a crown of life!

And then notice again the necessity of overcoming the spirit of this world. Jesus speaks this word to all seven of these churches and he is speaking it to us today. We must overcome just as our Lord overcame. While tribulation and persecution may arise as a result of our stand for the Word of God, Jesus says “be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” Amen!

My friends, the world may persecute a disciple of Jesus, but the disciple of Christ is on the winning team! Our total victory in Jesus will fully manifest when we rule and reign with him, so be of good cheer!

Also, notice Jesus says he understands their *poverty*. The poverty believers experienced at Smyrna was a product of persecution. Perhaps like those in the book of Hebrews, their possessions were confiscated by their persecutors. However, Jesus says those believers were rich! Indeed, great is their reward in heaven.

Now look at verses 12 through 17 with me:

12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

13 I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

The church at Pergamos lived in a city given over to idolatry. This is why Jesus described it as “where Satan’s seat is.” The church was the minority, but they held fast to the name of Jesus and refused to deny his faith. They did so even in the days in which Antipas was put to death.

Please notice how Jesus describes Antipas. Jesus says he was my “faithful martyr.” Antipas was a faithful witness for Jesus even though the enemies of the faith put him to death. My friends, the Lord Jesus is looking for faithful witnesses today who will stand for him and hold fast his name. He is looking for faithful witnesses who refuse to deny the faith in order to get along with this world.

May I ask you a question: *are you going to stand for Christ even as our nation fights against us as never before? Will you remain faithful even if the wicked ascend to greater levels of power?*

Prepare your heart to overcome for Christ no matter the cost. The honor we receive in his presence will be worth it all!