

WCBC WORSHIP SERVICE - AUGUST 20, 2017

TOPIC: THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF REVELATION

Sermon 2: "Smyrna: The Suffering Church!"

TEXT: Revelation 2:8-11

INTRO: The City Of Smyrna!

I. CHRIST'S EXPLANATION OF THEIR SUFFERING:

vv. 9-10a

- 1. They were afflicted - v.9a
 - A. By the phony Jews' scandal - v.9b cf. Rom. 2:28-29; John 8:44
 - Alexander The Metalworker!
 - B. By Satan's imminent persecution - v.10b
 - Dr. Charles Ryrie!
- 2. They were impoverished - v.9a
 - The Rich Fool!

II. CHRIST'S INSTRUCTION IN THEIR SUFFERING:

v.10

- 1. *"Do not be afraid!"* - v.10a
 - A. Everything, including suffering, is always under Christ's control!
 - B. Suffering is but momentary!
- 2. *"Be faithful!"* - v.10

III. CHRIST'S REWARD FOR THEIR SUFFERING:

vv.10-11

- 1. They will receive the *"crown of life!"* - v.10b
- 2. They will not experience extreme, painful suffering! - v.11b cf. 20:14-15

CONCLUSION: The Lord Jesus had suffered for us so that we could be saved!

Polycarp's Martyrdom!

In a letter addressed by the church at Smyrna to the churches in the Christian world, it is related that the Jews joined with the heathen in clamoring that Polycarp should be cast to the lions or burned alive,

and the Jews were foremost in bringing logs for the pile and in the endeavor to prevent the remains of the martyr from being delivered to his Christian friends for burial. It was the time of the public games. The city was crowded, and the crowds were excited. Suddenly, the shout went up, "Away with the atheists, let Polycarp be searched for."

No doubt Polycarp could have escaped, but already he had a dream in which he saw the pillow under his head burning with fire, and he had awakened to tell his disciples, "I must be burned alive!" His whereabouts were betrayed to the persecutors by a little slave girl who collapsed under torture, and they came to arrest him. Not even the soldier captain wished to see Polycarp die. On the brief journey to the city, he pled with the old man,

"What harm is it to say, 'Caesar is lord' and to sacrifice and save your life?" But Polycarp was adamant that for him, only Jesus Christ was Lord.

He entered the arena. The proconsul gave him the choice of cursing the name of Christ, and making sacrifice to Caesar, or death. "Eighty and six years have I served Him," said Polycarp, "and He has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?" The proconsul threatened him with burning. Polycarp replied, "You threaten me with the fire that burns for a time and is quickly quenched, for you do not know the fire which awaits the wicked in the judgment to come and in everlasting punishment. Why are you waiting?" Come do what you will." And he remained unmoved. So the crowds came flocking with their sticks from the workshops, from the baths, and the Jews, even though they were breaking the Sabbath law by carrying such burdens, were foremost in the clamor, and bringing wood for the fire. They were going to bind him at the stake. "Leave me as I am," he said, "for He who gives me power to endure the fire will grant me to remain in the flames unmoved, even without the security you will give by binding." So they let him loosely in the flames, and there he died for Christ! This is the culmination of the persecution of this little Church of Smyrna. - John MacArthur

Verse For Today

"For I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us! - Romans 8:18

Food For Thought

"Nothing happens to you that hasn't happened to someone else!" - William Feather

