

## Weekly Study Guide | 10/27/24

### Message to the Church in Smyrna

Read [Revelation 2:8-11](#)

*8 “To the angel of the church in Smyrna write: These are the words of him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again. 9 I know your afflictions and your poverty—yet you are rich! I know about the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. 10 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 for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor’s crown. 11 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who is victorious will not be hurt at all by the second death.*

**Bible References:** [Revelation 1:17-18, 22:13](#); [Matthew 6:20](#); [Romans 2:28-29](#); [Matthew 11:2-6](#); [Luke 22:31-32](#); [James 1:12](#); [John 16:33](#); [2 Corinthians 2:14-16](#)

### Questions:

1. What are the themes of the verses above? What is the main message to the church in Smyrna? Summarize it in a word or a short sentence.
2. In what way is the church in Smyrna commended? Does this church receive any correction? Why is this significant? What were they facing? What encouragement did they receive?
3. How does suffering figure into the Christian life? Have you ever been persecuted for your faith? Has anyone spoken evil of you? Have you ever experienced poverty? Where are ultimate riches found? Based on this passage, what does it mean to be victorious?
4. What do you think the Spirit is saying to the Church today? Is there a specific message for us today? The church in America? The church in our valley?
5. Share a few takeaways from this lesson. What is a practical way you can apply this to your life? How can it help strengthen your relationship with God? What difference will this make to your daily outlook?

*See back for more!*

**For later:** What about you? Prayerfully consider how this lesson relates to you. What is a practical way you can apply this to your life? How can it help strengthen your relationship with God? What difference will this make in your life? Is there anything you need to change in light of this lesson?

### **Summary:**

The church in Smyrna was known for its suffering and is often referred to as the persecuted church. Smyrna is a derivation of the Greek word for myrrh, a resin used as a fragrant perfume for the living ([Matthew 2:11](#)) and the dead in burial ([John 19:39](#)). Likewise, Jesus is identified as Him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again ([Revelation 2:8](#)). The association with death and life perfectly parallels the suffering church at Smyrna. Like myrrh, produced by crushing a fragrant plant, the church at Smyrna, though crushed by persecution, gave off a sweet-smelling aroma of faithfulness to God.

Many believe this church represents the martyrs of all ages and the sweet-smelling fragrance of their faithfulness until death. There was no rebuke for this church and because they were faithful until death, their candlestick has never been removed. Christianity has never completely left this city. It is the only one of the seven cities still flourishing. In contrast, the city of Ephesus was later moved to a site about three kilometers from where it was in John's day, just as the church was threatened with removal from its place in [Revelation 2:5](#). Today Ephesus is a deserted ruin with no people. Smyrna is still a large seaport with a present population of about 275,000 people. Today, it is known as Izmir, Turkey.

In this life, you will have trouble ([John 16:33](#)). Whether affliction, poverty, slander, persecution, or even prison and death, we are called to be fearless in the face of various trials and testing. When life presses you down, be found faithful. Be the pleasing aroma of Christ rising up to God ([2 Corinthians 2:14-16](#)). Tribulation in this life is momentary. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and you will receive life as the victor's crown. Those who are victorious will not be hurt at all by the second death.