

REV 2

GUARDIANS

OF THE GOSPEL

VOL 2 - SMYRNA

**THE HOLY SPIRIT'S GUIDE
TO BECOMING A
VICTORIOUS CHURCH**

Encourage the group to take turns reading and answering questions.

You will be asked questions on the topic. You can open the question to the group as you reach each question.

TOPIC: GUARDIANS OF THE GOSPEL

Sermon audio: outlookchurch.co.za/sermons/299

READER 1

As Guardians of the Gospel we need to learn something important about the revelation of God from each of the letters written to each of the churches. This week we have the church of Smyrna. This church was not doing anything wrong like the other churches, instead they were struggling and suffering.

Revelation 2:9-10

⁹I know about your

suffering and your poverty—but you are rich! I know the blasphemy of those opposing you. They say they are Jews, but they are not, because their synagogue belongs to Satan. ¹⁰Don't be afraid of what you are about to suffer. The devil will throw some of you into prison to test you. You will suffer for ten days. But if you remain faithful even when facing death, I will give you the crown of life

The church in Smyrna was about to face a serious series of challenges and suffering. But God wanted the church to be helped by the suffering rather than hurt by it.

Question 1: Can you identify areas of suffering in your life? Are they areas where you are suffering because of your own sin or are you suffering for the gospel?

Our view of the world and everything that is around us is shrunk to the size of our pain. If we are suffering a lot, we see only a little. This is how it happens in the world, but God wants it to be the other way around.

God wants suffering to stretch us rather than shrink us, but for that to happen we first need to have a strong revelation of God.

If your revelation of God is smaller than your suffering, then suffering will shrink your revelation of God further. For this reason we need to understand that our God is bigger than our suffering.

Isaiah 41:4

⁴Who has done such mighty deeds, summoning each new generation from the beginning of time? It is I, the Lord, the First and the Last. I alone am he.

Revelation 22:13

¹³“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.”

READER 3

We serve a God that is all powerful and sovereign over all. We need to catch a revelation of the great vastness of our God.

The suffering we endure should stretch our revelation of God. When we suffer we should seek out God, which should increase our revelation of Jesus.

Revelation 2:8

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

Jesus gives us a revelation of himself before encouraging the church about their suffering to

come. When we suffer, we should seek out greater revelation of Jesus. Jesus was before everything and has faced everything we could ever face. Jesus can help us through whatever we face because he has been through it all.

Question 2: Does your worldview shrink with your pain? How can you seek a greater revelation of God in your suffering?

READER 4

Our suffering should bring great revelation of Jesus, but it should also stretch our thinking of kingdom richness.

Revelation 2:9

⁹“I know about your suffering and your poverty—but you are rich! I know the blasphemy of those opposing you. They say they are Jews, but they are not, because their synagogue belongs to Satan.”

The world sees this suffering and poverty as a limiting factor. The world tells us that suffering will reduce us. God, however; sees suffering as a growth factor.

READER 5

2 Corinthians 8:1-2

¹Now I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, what God in his kindness has done through the churches in Macedonia. ²They are being tested by many troubles, and they are very poor. But they are also filled with abundant joy, which has overflowed in rich generosity.

In the Kingdom of God, this very unnatural and backwards way of thinking can take effect in our lives. These people were suffering poverty, but their faith grew because they understood Kingdom wealth, and were able to be generous with what little they had.

Suffering should get us to dig deeper into God where we will start to see His richness and the richness of His Kingdom.

READER 6

Suffering should also stretch our thinking about death and resurrection.

Revelation 2:11

¹¹“Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches. Whoever is victorious will not be harmed by the second death.”

When we understand that suffering will come to us on earth, and we choose to persevere through it for the sake of God’s Word, we inherit the right to enjoy eternity with God.

Revelation 21:8

⁸“But cowards, unbelievers, the corrupt, murderers, the immoral, those who practice witchcraft, idol worshipers, and all liars—their fate is in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”

When we understand what the second death really is we can see that there will be suffering at some point either way. Either we can choose to be faithful to God and suffer for His sake now on earth, which is just a short while, or we suffer for eternity.

Our attitude of suffering reflects our revelation of the gospel. Suffering should be stretching us, not shrinking us.

Question 3: Is your attitude towards suffering one that is stretching you? Will you be able to accept suffering in your own life, knowing that God has a great reward for you in heaven?

SHARE YOUR HIGHLIGHT

Take turns sharing what stood out to you the most from what we read. What stood out to you and *why*?

ACTION STEP

What action step can you take to respond to God's Word?

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