

Series: Letters to the Churches  
Title: Persevere in Faith  
Text: Revelation 2: 8-11  
Date: March 7, 2013  
Place: SGBC, New Jersey

Today, our text will be Revelation 2: 8-11. **Revelation 2: 8: And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write.** The letter is written to the church in Smyrna but it is just as much to us right here today.

Smyrna was just up the coast from Ephesus, on the Aegean Sea. It was a rich, pagan city, given to idolatry. But God established a church there, probably using the apostle Paul. Acts 19: 10 says in the 2 years Paul preached at Ephesus, “all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.”

**Proposition:** The Lord gives no correction to this church. In this letter, the Lord Jesus encourages us to persevere in the faith. The Lord Jesus promises a crown of life to all who persevere in faithful unto death.

**Divisions:** I. CHRIST ENCOURAGES US TO PERSEVERE BY REMINDING US WHO HE IS—**V8: And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;** II. CHRIST ENCOURAGES US TO PERSEVERE BY REMINDING US THAT HE KNOWS US AND HE KNOWS OUR ENEMIES--**V9: I 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;** III. CHRIST ENCOURAGES US TO PERSEVERE BY TELLING US NOT TO FEAR THE THINGS WE SHALL SUFFER—**10: Fear 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::** IV. CHRIST ENCOURAGES US TO PERSEVERE REMINDING US OF WHAT AWAITS US—**V10:...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. 11: He 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.**

**I. CHRIST ENCOURAGES US TO PERSEVERE BY REMINDING US WHO HE IS—V8:...These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;**

When we face troubling times, usually our attention becomes focused on the waves of trouble. So the first thing Christ does in his salutation is to lift up our heads to him—v8: **These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;**

### **The First and the Last**

Christ is the First and the Last—the Alpha and Omega. We would say, “A to Z.” It means Christ our Savior is the eternal God—the whole of all things.

**Concerning the covenant of grace:** Christ is the first and last. He is the Mediator, surety, and messenger of it. Christ is the one who ratified and confirmed it in his blood. He is the covenant itself. All its blessings and promises are in him—and he is the sum and substance of those blessings.

**Concerning the Scriptures:** Christ is the fulfillment and end of the law and Christ is the Gospel. Christ is in the first verse of Genesis, “In the beginning God” and Christ is in the last verse in Revelation 22: 21 “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.” And Christ is the whole of everything said on every page in between.

**Concerning salvation:** Christ is the whole of salvation. Justification, sanctification, adoption, redemption, eternal glorification, all spiritual blessings are all in Christ Jesus.

**Concerning all providence:** Christ is the first cause and the last end of all things that come to pass—whether good or evil—all shall glorify God and work for the good of his people by him.

Isaiah 45:7: I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these *things*.

It means Christ is Perfect—the fullness of the Godhead. He is perfect God and perfect Man in one body. With all fullness of power, wisdom, grace, and righteousness as our Mediator and we are complete in him.

Colossians 1: 16: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him. 17: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. 18: And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. 19: For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.

Christ is the First one we behold when he saves us by his grace and for all who believe on him until death, Christ shall be the Last one into whose arms we shall remain for all eternity.

Revelation 1:8: I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

Application: Do you see how he encourages us to persevere in faith by telling us he is the beginning and the end? Not only that, but since he is encouraging us to persevere in faith unto death he reminds us of this:

### **Dead and Alive**

These things saith he “**which was dead, and is alive.**” Christ Jesus is about to tell us that all who remain faithful until death shall receive a crown of life. Before he does so, he reminds us that he is the Firstborn from the dead, **which was dead and is alive.**

Christ our Forerunner took our sins, took our punishment, took our eternal death, and has conquered death and hell for each and every sinner for whom he died. Now, Christ our Forerunner is Alive! Christ is our Foundation; Christ is the Builder of his House and Christ is the Headstone.

**Application:** The next time your hands begin to hang down and your weary steps begin to falter—remember Christ was dead for us as our Substitute but now he is alive for us as our all-powerful Head and Advocate with the Father.

Romans 5: 8: But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9: Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. 10: For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

**Be sure to get that last part: WE SHALL BE SAVED BY HIS LIFE!**

## II. CHRIST ENCOURAGES US TO PERSEVERE BY REMINDING US THAT HE KNOWS US AND OUR ENEMIES--V9: I 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;

Whatever our trouble, wherever our pathway leads, whoever we encounter along the way—Christ Jesus our Lord and our Savior knows.

### I Know Thy Works

Let this world boast of their works—we will keep our mouths shut about our works and rest assured that Christ knows our works—that is all that matters—Christ knows.

### I Know Thy Tribulations

Christ assures every believer of two things. First, “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” (2Ti 3:12 AV) John 16: 33: In the world ye shall have tribulation. Secondly, “but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” (Jn 16: 33)

Isaiah 43: 1: But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called *thee* by thy name; thou *art* mine. 2 When thou passest through the waters, I *will be* with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. 3 For I *am* the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt *for* thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. 4 Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. 5 Fear not: for I *am* with thee:...

### I Know Thy Poverty

Christ says, “I know thy poverty (but thou art rich).” One day we will once again face what the early believers faced. When they confessed Christ and were “put out of the synagogue” it meant they lost all standing in the community, their jobs, everything.

Hebrews 11: 35...others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: 36 And others had trial of *cruel* mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: 37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; 38 (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and *in* mountains, and *in* dens and caves of the earth.

Oh, but though poor in temporal things, the Lord Jesus says, “**but thou art rich.**”

Luke 6:20: And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.

2 Corinthians 8:9: For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

2 Corinthians 6:10: As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

Believers have the unsearchable riches of Christ; the riches of his glory; the riches of his grace; the riches of the full assurance of understanding, of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

### **I Know the Blasphemy**

I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan; The Lord knows those who are truly his and those who are not. Churches that teach sinners are saved by their morality is a synagogue of Satan. Churches that teach sinners that God has done all he can do now it is up to the sinner is a synagogue of Satan. Churches that preach works for salvation is a synagogue of Satan.

Christ knows them that are his. God our Father wrote our names in the Lambs book of life before the world was made. Christ said, "I know my sheep."

Luke 3:17: Whose fan *is* in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.

**Application:** So believer, when you feel surrounded by a host of will-workers who belittle you for being in the minority—for being a remnant—just remember the Lord knows.

Psalm 1:6: For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Psalm 37:18: The LORD knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be for ever.

**III. CHRIST ENCOURAGES US TO PERSERVER BY TELLING US NOT TO FEAR—V10: Fear 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:**

### **Fear None of Those Things**

There is something comforting to hear the Lord forewarn us that we shall suffer—yet he says "fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer." Men under the power of the devil shall try their best to bind the word of God from going forth by throwing his people into prison: and there are many different kinds of prisons—various kinds of bondage and restraints.

**Illustration:** Did it work with John Bunyan? It afforded him a quiet place to concentrate all his efforts on writing works that are still being read to this day.

Remember Christ is the First and the Last—the devil can do nothing but what Christ permits—and if Christ permits it then it is certainly best and will issue in a good ending. Remember what our Savior told Pilot?

John 19:11 Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above:

Notice it is for a reason—**v10: that ye may be tried. Follow the example of our Savior.**

1 Peter 2:23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously:

1Peter 4:16 Yet if *any man suffer* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

And notice the Lord gives a definite, set time to the suffering—**10 days**—it means our suffering will not last forever. Everything on this earth is temporary—including our troubles.

Luke 12:6: Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?  
7 But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.

**Application:** Brethren, Christ has redeemed us—he purchased us with his own blood—we belong to him for eternity—and none shall pluck us from his hand. The worst a man can do to us will be the best thing for us—if they kill us they just open the door to eternal bliss with our Savior.

**IV. CHRIST ENCOURAGES US TO PERSEVERE IN FAITH TELLING US WHAT AWAITS US—  
V10:…be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. 11: He 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.**

### **Be Thou Faithful unto Death**

Christ says, “Be thou faithful unto death.” Cast all your care upon Christ for he careth for you. Never cease trusting Christ. Trust him unto death

### **A Crown of Life**

And I will give thee a crown of life—what a crown—a crown of life! The crown for every believer shall be eternal life itself. The way it will be proven that we are truly chosen, truly redeemed by his blood, truly born of his Spirit is “if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.” (Heb 4: 6…

Hebrews 3: 12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. 13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;

### **No Hurt**

Christ says, “**He 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.**” That separation from God which Christ suffered on the tree—is the second death—which he conquered for those he represented. For those who do not trust Christ—physical death will just be the beginning of death. Then comes the second death: the worm that never dies.

But those who die in faith shall live with Christ forever and ever. **He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.** (John 5:25; 11:25; Rev. 20:6). We have been ordained to eternal life (Acts 13:48). Christ purchased eternal life for us (Heb. 9:12). We have eternal life now (1 John 5:13; Heb. 11:13- 16; Col. 1:21-23).

Now, come back in the second hour and we will see what we can learn about our eternal inheritance.

**Amen!**