



Revelation 2:8-11 Small Group Discussion Questions

- Have someone in your group read Revelation 2:8-11. What do we learn about the church in Smyrna in these verses? What is life like for them?
- Verse 9 mentions “tribulation” that the church is facing/is about to face. What kind of tribulation does it seem like they are facing?
 - Why do you think Christianity brought persecution onto the church at Smyrna? What is so polarizing about proclaiming that Jesus is Lord?
 - Why might our faith appeal to some while repelling others?
 - What might it say about us if our faith *only* appeals to others? What might it say about us if it *only* repels others?
 - Practically, how can we ensure that our faith is neither *too* confrontational nor *too* conciliatory to unbelievers?
- Jump back to verse 8. Why do you think Jesus introduces Himself as “the first and the last, who died and came to life?”
 - Why might this comfort a church going through persecution?
 - When we face trials and tribulations, what is it about Jesus’ *eternal* and *resurrected* identity that provides us comfort and endurance?
 - When have you experienced comfort from Jesus’ eternal and resurrected identity in the midst of tribulation?

- Jesus says he “knows” their tribulation. In addition to His eternal and resurrected nature, how does Jesus’ *knowledge* of our suffering help us in hard times in our lives?
- How could the church at Smyrna be “rich” even though they are poor?
 - What does this say about the true source of our value?
 - The spiritual state of the church defined them more than their material state. Is this hard to believe in our context? Why?
 - In a city, culture, and workplaces so focused on material wealth, how can we practically keep ourselves from believing that our value is in *what we have*?
 - Soon after Jesus says this, he commands the church: “do not fear.” How does correct belief about our value lead to courage?
- Verse 10 claims that “the devil” is about to throw some of the church into prison “for 10 days”. What do you know about the devil? Why is it that Christians don’t have to fear him?
 - When Christians do overly fear the devil, what is it that they’re getting wrong about who he is in relation to God?
 - Why do you think Jesus specifies that the suffering has a definite end date of 10 days?
 - In contrast to the 10 days, what is the reward for the church if they are “faithful unto death”? What do you think it means to receive the “crown of life?”
 - How does the proper perspective on the duration of our suffering compared to eternity with Jesus help us when we face trials? In everyday life, what does it look like to remember that we have eternity in our future?
- Jesus says at the end of this passage that the “one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death.” What is the second death? How is it different than the first death?

- What is it about enduring in tribulation that leads us to assurance about our eternal destiny?
- What does it look like to live with confidence that though we will experience the first death, we will not be harmed by the second?
- After this whole discussion, what do you think it looks like, practically, to stay faithful in the trials of life, both large and small? How does Jesus lead believers to endure suffering differently than unbelievers?
- Before closing, have two people in your group pray for the persecuted church, as Wesley suggested.