



new life fellowship

Sermon Title: **Revelation: The Church at Smyrna**

Speaker: **Richard Villodas, Lead Pastor**

Scripture: **Revelation 3:8-11**

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.

(NIV)

Sermon Outline:

Jesus offers words of consolation as well as confrontation in the Book of Revelation and uses his word to show us how to hold both of these in dynamic tension.

It is very easy to organize our lives around the avoidance of suffering. In the US, happiness is one of the greatest values we treasure, and we will do almost anything to protect our comfort and happiness.

The more you try to avoid suffering, the more you suffer, because smaller and more insignificant things begin to torture you, in proportion to your fear of being hurt. The one who does most to avoid suffering is, in the end, the one who suffers most.

-Thomas Merton

The Book of Revelation is the most misunderstood, misapplied, and dangerous book of the Bible. It is prophetic literature, telling us what the future holds and who holds the future. It is apocalyptic literature which unveils and reveals what is happening behind the scenes, and it is also a letter that was sent to different churches to encourage them.

Smyrna is a thriving city with a wealthy economy yet they are experiencing a lot of pain and persecution.

Jesus has the following words for church at Smyrna: **I am, I know** and **I will give**. Jesus shares these same words with you today, no matter what you are experiencing today.

I am

Jesus’s words remind us that we have someone powerful in our corner and we are connected to a great source of power.

I know

Some of us are living under a burden that is crushing you. Jesus lets you know that he is with you and he has been there before.

I will give

Whether you know it or not you are rich because your suffering brings you closer to God. God wants to use your pain and suffering to give you a fresh revelation.

There is a quality of our faith that deepens when we experience pain. A type of spiritual aliveness only made possible when things are not going our way because God is particularly close to you at this point in your life.

Sometimes God allows us to go through a situation to give us a revelation.

To be human is to suffer and experience pain. Jesus lets us know that our suffering has an expiration date and is temporary. Jesus tells us: Don't be afraid. When He telling us this, he wants us to turn our eyes upward for he is with us.

Jesus tells us to be faithful and stay with him even though we prefer to give up. Being faithful is about holding onto to when we don't want to.

The invitation is to be faithful and stay with God. He will give us the victory's crown and we don't have to be afraid.

Sermon Summary:

This Sunday, Richard Villodas, Lead Pastor, continues our sermon series through a portion of the Book of Revelation. Today Pastor Rich explores the church at Smyrna and the words of consolation that Jesus offered to them and how these are words that we all need to hear today.

Sermon Questions:

1. Do you feel an invitation from Christ in today's scripture passage? Do any of the words resonate with you? If so, why?
2. Are you living in pain and suffering right now? Do you feel as though God near or far in your suffering? How can you honor Jesus when you are experiencing suffering?
3. When we are going through suffering and experiencing pain in our lives, we ask God why. Why we are suffering, searching and wanting answers to this question. Maybe instead of asking the question why, we need to accept that maybe you are going through a situation because you are about to be given a revelation about God you have never seen before?