



Ephesus

Series: The Seven Letters

Scripture: Revelation 2:8-11

Jesus never called us to _____ Christianity. He called us to _____ Him.

“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.” (v8)

Satan is _____ in his attack.

- Cannot control their _____. (v9)
- Cannot control the _____ of your suffering. (v10)
- Cannot _____ your _____ (v11)

Suffering tends to evoke one of two reactions in us: _____ or _____.

- 2 Corinthians 1:9
- John 16:33
- 1 Peter 2:20-21; 3:14; 4:12; 4:19; 5:10
- 2 Timothy 3:12
- The New Testament consistently emphasizes _____ suffering rather than _____ suffering.

Luke 9:23-24:

- _____
- _____
- _____

The church in Smyrna didn't _____ Christianity—they _____ the cross. They didn't _____ comfort—they _____ Christ.

Start Talking.

- Growing up, what was your favorite TV show to watch when you were home sick or had a day off from school?
- Have you ever purchased something because you thought it would make you happier, only to discover it didn't? What'd you learn?
- What stood out to you most from this week's message?

Start Thinking:

- Read Revelation 2:8-11.
- Why do you think Jesus introduces Himself to the church in Smyrna as "the First and the Last, who died and came to life again"?
- Jesus tells the believers they are materially poor but spiritually rich. How does that challenge the way our culture measures success?
- Pastor Troy highlighted three limits to Satan's power. Which of these truths encourages you the most? Why?
- Why do you think Jesus offered the church in Smyrna encouragement instead of a promise that their suffering would end?

Start Sharing:

- Pastor Troy contrasted a consumer mindset with a disciple mindset. Where do you see consumer thinking creeping into Christianity today?
- Have you ever been tempted to evaluate church primarily by your preferences rather than by God's mission? What helps keep your perspective centered on Christ?
- When you've experienced suffering, did it draw you closer to God (dependency) or tempt you toward discouragement (disillusionment)? What made the difference?
- What current challenge or hardship is testing your faith? How can remembering Jesus' faithfulness help you remain faithful?

Start Praying:

- For courage to remain faithful regardless of circumstances.
- For strength to endure trials without losing hope.
- For believers around the world who are experiencing persecution.
- That our church would become known not for comfort or convenience, but for faithful discipleship.

Start Doing:

- Read Luke 9:23-24. What does "taking up your cross daily" look like in your life right now?
- Pastor Troy ended with the question: "Is my life an acceptable offering to Jesus?" How would you answer that today?
- What's one area where Jesus may be asking you to choose faithfulness over comfort, convenience, or personal preference?
- How can your small group encourage one another to remain faithful when life becomes difficult?

Challenge for the Week:

Ask yourself this question every morning: "Today, will I choose comfort, or will I choose faithfulness?" Each day read Revelation 2:8-11 or Luke 9:23-24 and pray, "Jesus, help me follow You today, regardless of the cost."