

Faith That Lasts!

Rev. 2:8-11

Warren W. Wiersbe, The Bible Exposition Commentary, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 573.



Leap
of FAITH
Hebrews 11:1



Revelation 2:8–11 (NKJV)

⁸ “And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, ‘These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life:

⁹ “I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (*but you are rich*); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

¹⁰ Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

¹¹ “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.” ’

- The name Smyrna means “*bitter*” and is related to the word myrrh.
- The assembly at Smyrna was persecuted for the faith, which explains why the Lord emphasized His death and resurrection as He opened His message.
- No matter what experiences God’s people may have, their Lord identifies with them.

Approval

Revelation 2:9 (NKJV)

“I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (*but you are rich*); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

- The church at Smyrna was not having an easy time of it! The members were persecuted, probably because they refused to compromise and say, “Caesar is Lord.”
- Smyrna was an important center of the Roman imperial cult, and anyone refusing to acknowledge Caesar as Lord would certainly be excluded from the guilds. This would mean unemployment and poverty. The word used here for *poverty* means “*abject poverty, possessing absolutely nothing.*”

- A large Jewish community also thrived in Smyrna.
- The Jews, of course, did not have to patronize the imperial cult since their religion was accepted by Rome; but they certainly would not cooperate with the Christian faith. So, from both Jews and Gentiles, the Christians in Smyrna received slander and suffering.

But They Were Rich!

- But they were rich! They lived for eternal values that would never change, riches that could never be taken away.

2 Corinthians 6:10 (NKJV)

as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

- In fact, their suffering for Christ only increased their riches.



**Our Struggles Are Not
With Flesh And Blood, But
With The Enemy, Satan,
Who Uses People To
Accomplish His Purposes.**



Leap of FAITH
Hebrews 11:1



Ephesians 6:12 (NKJV)

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Romans 8:38 (NKJV)

For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,

**The Jewish Synagogue Was
Actually A Synagogue Of
Satan. A True Jew Is Not One
Physically Or Racially, But
Spiritually.**



Leap of FAITH
Hebrews 11:1



Romans 2:17–29 (NKJV)

¹⁷ Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God,

¹⁸ and know His will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law,

¹⁹ and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,

²⁰ an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law.

²¹ You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal?

22 You who say, “Do not commit adultery,” do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?

23 You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law?

24 For “the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,” as it is written.

25 For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law; but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.

26 Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision?

27 And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, judge you who, even with your written code and circumcision, are a transgressor of the law?

28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh;

29 but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.

- Any religious group, Jewish or Gentile, that does not acknowledge Jesus Christ as God's Son is certainly acting contrary to God's will.



Admonition

Revelation 2:10–11 (NKJV)

¹⁰ Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

¹¹ “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.” ’



Don't be afraid!

No words of accusation are given to the congregation in Smyrna! They may not have enjoyed the approval of men, but they certainly received the praise of God.

However, the Lord did give them solemn words of admonition as they faced increased suffering:
“Don't be afraid!”

Psalm 56:11 (NKJV)

In God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid.
What can man do to me?

Hebrews 13:6 (NKJV)

So we may boldly say: “The LORD is my helper;



Don't Be Afraid!

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- However, the Lord did give them solemn words of admonition as they faced increased suffering: **“Don't be afraid!”**

Genesis 24:55 (NKJV)

But her brother and her mother said, “Let the young woman stay with us a few days, at least ten; after that she may go.”

Acts 25:6 (NKJV)

And when he had remained among them more than ten days, he went down to Caesarea. And the next day, sitting on the judgment seat, he commanded Paul to be brought.

Don't Be Afraid!

Romans 8:18 (NKJV)

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

- The important thing was faithfulness, standing true to Christ no matter what the government might threaten to do.

“Crown Of Life”

- The “crown of life” is the winner’s crown awarded at the annual athletic games.
- Smyrna was a key participant in the games, so this promise would be especially meaningful to believers living there.
- The Lord reinforced the promise given by James and assured His people that there was nothing to fear.

James 1:12 (NKJV)

Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

We Are Victors And Overcomers!

- Because they had trusted Him, they were overcomers—victors in the race of faith and, as overcomers, they had nothing to fear.



Hebrews 12:1–3 (NKJV)

1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

3 For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.

- Even if they were martyred, they would be ushered into glory, wearing crowns! They would never face the awful judgment of the second death, which is the lake of fire.

Revelation 20:14 (NKJV)

Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

Revelation 21:8 (NKJV)

But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

- It costs to be a dedicated Christian, in some places more than others. As end-time pressures increase, persecution will also increase; and God's people need to be ready.

1 Peter 4:12 (NKJV)

Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;

- The world may call us “poor Christians,” but in God's sight we are rich!



**You Have The
Faith To Last!**

