

Facing Fear with Faith

Revelation 2:8-11

Introduction

- A. Jesus identifies Himself as (compare to Rev 1:17,18)
 - 1. The F_____ and the Last, which is a unique title of God – Is 44:6
 - 2. Who was d_____ and has come to life – He is the victor over sin, death, the devil (see Col 2:14,15).
- B. Satan cannot war directly against God, only believers.
 - 1. If we are serious about serving God, Satan is serious about stopping us.
 - 2. How do we face His attacks? – this letter tells us to face fear with f_____.

Face financial attacks with the r_____ of faith (8,9a)

- A. Jesus states that He knows their t_____ (v. 8)
 - a. The KJV is based on _____ copy of Revelation which duplicated what Jesus said He knew with many of the other churches – their works.
 - b. Many version make this word p_____, but (e.g. afflictions, hardships) but the Greek word is singular (The NAS, ESV, and NLT correctly make it singular)
 - c. The particulars of this “tribulation” are then given (in this context, the word “and” in the Greek is explaining the tribulation Jesus sees – their poverty and blasphemy.
- B. What was their poverty?
 - 1. There are two Greek words translated as poverty and both are used in Lk 21:2,3.
 - a. The first word Luke uses describes the widow’s financial condition before she gave – she had very l_____ (Lk 21:2)
 - b. The second word Luke uses describes the widow’s financial condition after she gave – she had n_____ because she gave it all (Lk 21:3).
 - c. The leader and the church were financially d_____
 - 2. They were not destitute because they lacked opportunity
 - a. Smyrna was situated in a rich valley and was a convenient place for t_____
 - b. This city thrived financially and still is in existence today (called Izmir)
 - 3. They were destitute because of the financial policies against Christians who refused to worship the e_____

- C. How might Satan financially attack Christians and the churches of today? (Eph 2:2)
1. Take away our t_____ exempt status if teach contrary to culture or the law (e.g. homosexuality; abortion; gender identity)
 2. Take away your j_____ if ordered by your employer to do something sinful (e.g. lie)
- D. Focus on the true r_____ of God's grace
1. By God's grace you have been saved from the p_____ of sin (Eph 1:7 - *In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, **according to the riches of His grace** which He lavished upon us.*
 2. By God's grace you are continually being saved from the p_____ of sin (Eph. 3:16 - *that He would grant you, according to the **riches of His glory**, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man).*
 3. By God's grace you will be saved from the very p_____ of sin (Col 1:27 – *God willed to make known what is the **riches of the glory** of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory).*

Face religious attacks with the d_____ of faith (9b)

- A. The church and the leader were being attacked verbally by a religious group that called themselves J_____.
1. Jesus defined Jewishness not by a person's ancestry but by a person's d_____ (Jn 8:39 – *if you are children of Abraham, do the deeds of Abraham*)
 2. Jesus called "Jews" who opposed him as having the d_____ as their father (Jn 8:44)
 3. Jesus called the Jews in Smyrna a s_____ of Satan (literally means a coming together) – they were a tool of the devil used to spread lies about the church and this leader.
- B. Jesus was blasphemed by His fellow Jews
1. He was called a glutton and a d_____ and a friend of tax collectors and sinners (Matt 11:19)
 2. Jesus responded that wisdom was vindicated by her d_____ (in other words, His miracles and His preaching for people to repent was the true testimony)
- C. What kind of religious blasphemies might we have to face?
1. Do we decide to not risk ministering to sex offenders because of what we might be called?
 2. Do we decide to not risk ministering to the homosexual or the transgender because of what might be said?

3. Do we risk ministering to the prostitutes and the criminals because of what it might look like?
- D. Don't let fear of religious blasphemies keep us from ministering – reach out to the lost, love them without condoning their sinfulness.

Face legal attacks with the promise of faith (10,11)

- A. Satan was going to throw some of them into p_____ as a test of their faith.
 1. Jesus stated that they would have to endure for _____ days.
 2. Jesus told them to be faithful to the point of d_____
 - a. In 155 A.D., the overseer of the church of Smyrna (Polycarp) could have avoided execution if he would renounce Jesus as his S_____.
 - b. The executioner set fire to his body but the f_____ were ineffective.
 - c. The executioner ran his s_____ through Polycarp and the blood extinguished the flames.
 - d. Polycarp knew that the c_____ of life awaited him.
- B. The crown of life
 1. There are two Greek words translated as crown
 - a. A k_____ crown
 - b. A v_____ crown (as here in Rev 2:10)
 2. The victory crown was given to an a_____ who won a competition.
 3. The crown is e_____ life in the fullest sense (when our spirit, soul, and body are made complete at Jesus's coming – 1 Thess 5:23,24)
 4. The crown of life is given to all those who l_____ the Lord (Jms 1:12)
- C. Today's focus on taking Christian freedoms away
 1. North Korea - over 5_____ Christians are imprisoned in North Korea – where do you think their focus is?
 2. United States
 - a. Lawsuits against medical professional for refusing to perform an a_____
 - b. Lawsuits against clergy for preaching against h_____
 - c. The trend of the U.S. is to legalize i_____ (legalizing physician assisted suicide is spreading)
 - d. Days are coming when being a citizen of this country will be incompatible with Christianity (Rev 13).
 3. Our hope is not to be placed in government but in the crown of life which Jesus will give to all who love Him.