



**Part 2:
...to Hurting People
Rev. 2:8-11**

Revelation chapters 2 and 3 contains seven little-known letters from Jesus to seven ancient churches. Reading them is like reading a postcard from Jesus directly to you!

"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. I know your afflictions and your poverty --yet you are rich! I know the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. 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 the crown of life. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death." Rev. 2:8-11

4 encouragements from Jesus to suffering people:

1. " _____ "
"I know... your afflictions..."
"I know... your poverty..."
"I know... the slander..."

Remember Jesus _____ and _____

2. " _____ "
"Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer."
He does **not** say "Do not _____"
He does **not** say "Do not be afraid for you will _____"
"I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days."

3. " _____ "
"Be faithful, even to the point of death..."

4. " _____ "
"...and I will give you the crown of life."

How do I make this work in my life?

John Stott points out many truths about Jesus in just these few verses:

- He is eternal *...the First and the Last...*
- He is victorious *...who died and came to life again...*
- He is all knowing *...I know...*
- He is sovereign *...you will suffer persecution for ten days.*
- He is generous *...I will give you the crown of life...*

The bottom line: Focus on _____ !

Daily Meditations

This week's memory verse:

Jesus said: "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." John 16:33

Monday

Look back over your notes and read Revelation 2:8-11. In what way are you suffering now?

In what way are you going through stress now?

What do you hear in Christ's words that comforts you, and relates directly to your situation?

Which of the four "encouragements" from Christ means the most to you right now?

Ask Jesus to help you relax in the four truths in Rev. 2:8-11. Ask Him to help you focus on Him.

Tuesday

Read Rev. 2:8-11 again. Jesus is very truthful about the fact that these Christians will go through terrible suffering. Why do you think that many modern Christians want to ignore this fact, or even try to imply that being a Christian means less trouble and an easier life?

Read John 16:32,33. How are these words of Jesus similar to those in Rev. 2?

Why is it important for us to know that we will go through trouble in this world even if we are doing God's will?

Why do you suppose the early Christians were relentlessly optimistic in spite of the fact they believed they would go through terrible suffering?

Ask God to help you stay full of faith and optimism without denying the reality of suffering and trouble. Ask Him to show you the key to living in faith!

Wednesday

Rev. 2:8-11 was written to suffering Christians. All through the Bible, believers are very honest about their struggles. For example, read 2 Corinthians 1:8-11. What pressures do you think Paul is facing that would cause him to despair even of life (See 7:5-7 and Acts 19:23-41)?

Paul found intense pressures led him to depend on God all the more (v. 9). How do you respond to pressures that seem beyond your ability to handle?

Whom do you know that is under intense pressure right now? How would Paul have you pray for them this week?

Pray for your friends undergoing trials right now. Perhaps you are at the point where you are "despairing of life itself" as Paul put it. Bring your concerns to God. Share your burden with trusted friends and ask them to pray for you as well.

Thursday

When you are hurting, what thought, song, or verse encourages you?

Read 2 Cor. 4:7-18. What truths keep Paul going in spite of his hardships?

Why does God allow Paul to go through these things?

How do these verses relate to Rev. 2:10,11?

Bring to God specific worries and pressures you are facing right now. Ask Him for wisdom to know how to handle them. Ask Him to give you a sense of comfort. Continue to pray for others who are going through difficulties as well.

Friday

Read 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:6. The final point in this weekend's message was that there will be a reward in heaven for those who endure suffering! What aspects of heaven do you like to think about? Why?

How does knowing that there is a home and a reward for you *eventually* help you go through difficulties *right now*?

Spend time in prayer thinking of heaven. Thank God that Jesus is preparing a place for you right now! Thank God specifically for some things that you know will be true of heaven and of your perfect, resurrected body. Ask God to help this idea of reward motivate you in this life!

Saturday

Complete any devotions you may have missed and polish up the memory verse. Please pray for the services this weekend. Thanks!