

 Break the ice

Write down what God is saying to you in today's message:

TOPIC: 7 Churches of Revelation – week 5

 Let's hear your story

1. Tell of a time when you had to explain to a friend or family member what it means to be persecuted for your faith in Jesus Christ?
2. What does Revelation 2:8 tell us about Jesus?  
**(He is the First and Last, who was dead, and came to life.)**
3. What does Jesus know about the church according to v.9? **(I know your works, tribulation, and poverty... and I know the blasphemy...)**
4. What is more important according to Jesus' words in v.9?  
**(Jesus said; I know your works, tribulation, and poverty but you are rich...)**

 Let's go deeper

5. How does Jesus encourage the church in v.10?  
**(Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer...)**
6. What would happen to some of the believers according to v.10?  
**(The devil is about to throw some of you into prison...)**
7. What is Jesus' encouragement to the believers in v.10?  
**(...Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.)**
8. What will happen to the one who overcomes according to v.11?  
**(He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.)**

 Let's apply this

**9. Revelation 2:10b; Be faithful** until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Jesus has no criticism for this church, only encouragement. He starts by reminding the believers that He overcame death, and He ends by encouraging them to be faithful (to trust / believe) until death.

- How can you be faithful to Jesus in times of persecution and tribulation?
- How did Jesus remain faithful and devoted to His Father's purposes?
- How can you encourage believers this week?

SUMMARY:

**7 Churches of Revelation:** Week 5 (The letter to the church at Smyrna).

**Read:** Revelation 2:8 – 11

- How would you encourage a believer who is being persecuted?
- What is most important; physical riches or spiritual riches?

In this letter Jesus only has encouragements, and no criticism to the Smyrna church:

**Background:** The Greek version of the name of the city means; "the city of myrrh." Myrrh was commonly used for embalming and associated with suffering and death. Smyrna was a beautiful city it was called "the glory of Asia." It was a wealthy city with a rich and prosperous port city, and known for their coinage and gold. This city was the centre of idol and emperor worship.

**v.8;** Jesus reveals Himself to the church at Smyrna. God declares Himself as the One with supreme authority; the First and the Last. He is the one with absolute power, the One who conquered the grave. The First and the Last are titles that belong only to the LORD. Jesus chose this title from His initial appearance to John to remind the believers in Smyrna that they serve the risen Lord, who is victorious over death.

**v.9;** What Jesus knows about the believers in Smyrna. Tribulation means pressure. Jesus tells this church that He knows and sees their persecution. He knows their hardships by His personal experience. Smyrna was a prosperous city. Yet the believers were poor. "The word used for 'poverty' is the word for beggary. The believers of Smyrna knew poverty because they were robbed and fired from jobs in persecution for the gospel. Slander and blasphemy mean evil speaking. Believers were falsely accused, and slandered for not worshipping the idols or emperors.

**v.10;** What Jesus wants the church in Smyrna to do. Jesus says; "do not fear." This is the most common commandment in the entire Bible because this is the most common challenge for believers. Jesus does not promise that life will be easy. But He does promise to be with us, His followers.

**FIVE ways of persecution according to v.9 – 10**

1. There will be **tribulation (pressure)**.  
This means that it will be harder to live in this city as a believer.
2. There will be **poverty** (beggary).  
Being a believer will cost you financially. Some will lose their jobs and inheritances.
3. You will be **slandered** / blasphemy (evil speaking).  
Being a believer means that your reputation might be destroyed.
4. There will be **suffering**. Being a believer will make your life more difficult.
5. It could include **death**. "To live is Christ and to die is gain."