



Today, we continue our sermon series through the seven letters to the seven churches in Revelation. The book of Revelation was written by the Apostle John while he was exiled on the island of Patmos. Most scholars date the letter around 95–96 AD, and it was written to real churches located in what is now modern-day Turkey. While many people associate Revelation with beasts, dragons, and the Antichrist, the book begins with something far more personal: Jesus speaking to His Church. This week, we study the letter to the church in Smyrna—a suffering church with no rebuke, only hope. Reflect on these questions and consider how Jesus encourages His people to remain faithful in the midst of suffering.

1. The church has always faced suffering and persecution (read Acts 12:1–4). Have you ever been in a situation where standing up for your faith made you uncomfortable or cost you something? What happened?
2. Read Revelation 1:12–16. John has an encounter with the risen Lord and shares with us all the details of what Jesus looks like. Reading the vivid description of Jesus, what do we learn about our risen Lord and the symbols surrounding Him?
3. Read Revelation 1:17–18 and 2:8. Why do you think Jesus begins by reminding the church in Smyrna that He is “the First and the Last, who died and came to life again”? What does that say to a suffering church? How does that comfort them?
4. Read Revelation 2:9–10. Jesus tells the church, “I know your affliction and your poverty—yet you are rich!” Too often, we mistake what real wealth looks like. Jesus points us to spiritual richness. What does being spiritually rich look like to you?
5. Neal shared that over 380 million Christians face high levels of persecution today (as of 2024). How does hearing those statistics affect the way you think about your own faith or freedoms?
6. Read Revelation 2:11. Jesus tells the early church they will be victorious. What are some practices in our spiritual growth that help us stay connected to Jesus so we can experience this victory in Christ?
7. Jesus tells the church not to be afraid of suffering and promises they will not be hurt by the second death. What fears are most common in your spiritual life? How can God’s promises strengthen us in those moments?
8. Close in prayer, asking God to rekindle your love for Him this week.