

## **What God Expects of the Church**

Lesson 7

Revelation 2:8-11

January 15, 2023

### **Staying Encouraged in Tough Times**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

When life becomes difficult, how does God expect us to respond? What are His expectations of us as followers of Christ? What can we learn from God's Word that can help prepare us for tough times and encourage us to remain faithful?

In the book of Revelation, the church at Smyrna was warned by God to be prepared for severe persecution and encouraged them to remain faithful. He promised a reward to those who held on to the faith.

God calls us to be faithful to Him but never qualifies this with exceptions based upon circumstance or degree of difficulty; He expects us to remain faithful no matter what. Sometimes this can seem like an unattainable goal as we quickly reach the limits of our pain or unhappiness, and it's then that it seems faith is the hardest to maintain. But God knows us, He knows our limits, He knows our suffering and He promises each of us an eternal life of joy as we dwell with Him free from pain and grief. Our faith holds us tightly to that promise.

***Memory verse: "Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor's crown."—Revelation 2:10b***

Pray, and read Revelation 2:8-11. What questions or observations do you have about this passage?

**OBSERVATION: What does the passage say?**

1. Who is speaking (through John's writing) to the church at Smyrna, and how does He refer to Himself? (Revelation 2:8)
2. What does Jesus declare about the church at Smyrna? (Revelation 2:9)
3. What does Jesus say the church at Smyrna is going to go through? (Revelation 2:10a)
4. What will be the reward for those who are faithful to God? (Revelation 2:10b)
5. What will happen to the one who is victorious? (Revelation 2:11)





2. The devil wants us to lose our faith, and he will test us, distract us, and discourage us as often as possible. How can you can reaffirm and strengthen your faith in Christ through this persecution?

3. Jesus promises us the crown of life if we remain faithful to Him. Picture the reward of eternal life in God's presence, worshipping Him face to face. Write a prayer for strength and faith to withstand the trials of life, and thank God for His faithfulness to you.