



Lent 2020: Coming back to Jesus

Week 2: To the Church in Smyrna

Welcome and worship

Do you remember a time when you were young and felt really rich? Maybe someone gave you some money for a present, pocket money etc. How did you feel?

⁸ '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. ⁹ I know your afflictions and your poverty – yet you are rich! I know about the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. ¹⁰ 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 life as your victor's crown.

¹¹ Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who is victorious will not be hurt at all by the second death.

This is the most wonderful passage, because it says that God knows our afflictions and poverty, but also that we are rich

The story of the Church in Smyrna

- One of the Big 3 with Ephesus and Pergamum, but the church is poor

Where do you think God says to our churches, “I see your poverty and your afflictions...”?

Why might he say, “Yet you are rich!”?

Remember that God knows... he is the First and the Last

- There is no promise of respite, at least in this life
- Be faithful, not afraid (Polycarp) - look at the prize!

What about us? Let's celebrate where we feel rich, and acknowledge where we feel poor.

Let's have an honest think for ourselves or chat with one another. If we knew it would get harder to be a Christian than easier in this country, and it wouldn't get better in this life, would we keep going? What would keep us going? What might hold us back?

Let's pray to be filled with the Spirit, and for a vision of the life that is to come.

I am no longer my own, but yours.
Put me to what you will, rank me
with whom you will;
put me to doing, put me to suffering;
let me be employed for you, or laid
aside for you,
exalted for you, or brought low for
you;
let me be full,
let me be empty,
let me have all things,

let me have nothing:
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all
things
to your pleasure and disposal.
And now, glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
you are mine and I am yours. So be
it.
And the covenant now made on
earth, let it be ratified in heaven.
Amen