



Sermon Drill-Down Notes

Series: Revelation: This Present Church
Message: Smyrna – The Persecuted Church
Date: 1/15/2012
Speaker: James Wagstaff

Drilling Down

1. What have been your greatest trials and times of suffering? Can you think of a time when you have suffered or faced persecution for your faith in Christ specifically? What have you learned through your experiences?
2. Read Revelation 2:8-11. What is significant about the Name of Jesus in 2:8? What were the four trials the church faced then? How relevant are these trials for us today and why do we often assume trials are not part of the Christian life? (Read Matthew 5:10-12, John 15:18, 2 Timothy 3:2).
3. If God is in control, why does He allow suffering/persecution? Read the following verses and discuss: Genesis 50:20, 2 Corinthians 1:9, Hebrews 10:34, 2 Corinthians 4:16-18, James 1:2, Colossians 1:24 and 1 Peter 1:6-7.
4. Do you agree/disagree with the following John Stott quote regarding trials and persecution: *“The ugly truth is that we tend to avoid suffering by compromise. Our moral standards are often not noticeably higher than the standards of the world. Our lives do not challenge and rebuke unbelievers by our integrity, or purity or love. The world sees in us nothing to hate.”*
5. Re-read Revelation 2:8-11. What do we learn about the character of God and His love for us during times of suffering? What is the promise for faithfulness and what does this mean to you?

Notes and Quotes

Sam Storms: *(Suffering) “is not designed by God to destroy our faith but to intensify it but that will never happen if we cannot see beyond the pain to the purpose of our heavenly Father...His design is to knock out every prop from underneath us to we wholly rely on Him...”*

Pray for the persecuted church today: Over 160,000 Christians are put to death every year; Since the 1900's over 35 million Christians have been martyred; 200 million Christians today are denied basic human rights; the main areas of persecution are North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Somalia, China and Myanmar.