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| **Grant Street Baptist Church** | **Sermon Notes** |
| **Jeremy Beck** | **April 21, 2021** |

Title: *“Worthy to Suffer”*

Scripture: **Revelation 2:8-11** “To the angel **(pastor/Polycarp)** 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. 9I know your afflictions **(tribulation/persecution)** and your poverty **(poor as beggars materially)**—yet you are rich **(rich as kings spiritually – James 2:5 “Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?”)**! I know about the slander **(Jews of Smyrna were more hostile to the Christians than in most places, they circulated lies about the Christians that intensified their persecution)** of those who say they are Jews and are not **(a true Jew has been born again through Christ Jesus – Romans 2:28-29)**, but are a synagogue of Satan **(1 John 3:10 – John called them out that they were worshipping Satan because they chose not to worship Christ)**. 10Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer **(Fear and faith cannot coexist, fear is the opposite of faith)**. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you **(God allows us to be tested/tried)**, and you will suffer persecution for ten days **(reference to the 10 different rulers of Rome during this period of Church history from Nero to Diocletion)**. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor’s crown **(crown of life – James 1:12 reserved for those that persevere under persecution)**. 11Whoever 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.”

Message: *7 PARTS TO EACH OF THE 7 CHURCH LETTER’S*

1. Who was the letter written to/about?

 A. Church name: **Smyrna, pastored by Polycarp**

B. Period of church history: **100-300 AD (200 yr period)**

C. Church meaning: **“myrrh”…painkiller/embalming, thought of myrrh immediately brought to mind the idea of suffering and death**

**-The church of Smyrna underwent much persecution; property/possessions confiscated, imprisoned, martyred**

2. How did John describe Jesus? **Him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again; omnipresent (1:8)**

3. “Eyes were like blazing fire” **vs 9 “know”…sees the inner man**

4. What was the work of the church? **Afflictions, poverty, slandered against**

5. What was Jesus’ response to their work? **To fear not, do not be afraid, to be faithful**

6. “Obedient Hearing” **vs 7 “whoever has ears, let them hear”…be victorious**

7. What is the promise(s) to those who hear with the intent to obey? **Receive the victor’s crown (crown of life), not be hurt at all by the second death (lake of fire)**

**Polycarp** (pastor of Smyrna, led to Christ by John)

-As he was about to be burned alive as a martyr he spoke these words: *“Eighty and six years have I served Him and He never did me any harm. How then can I blaspheme my King and My Savior. I thank thee that thou has graciously thought me worthy of this day and this hour and that I may receive a portion in the number of thy martyr’s in the cup of thy Christ.”*

Application:

* Worthy to Suffer…Jesus says that this church was worthy to suffer because they had faith not fear, they passed the test He allowed Satan to put them through
* A special crown, the Crown of Life is even reserved for those in this church and believers alike that persevere through their suffering and persecution for their faith
* Could it be said of you that you too are worthy to suffer because you have faith and not fear?