

God's People Are Not Immune to Suffering  
(Revelation 2:8-11)

Introduction:

1. Last Sunday evening we studied these verses to illustrate the 8<sup>th</sup> Beatitude (Matthew 5:10-12).
2. The Christians in Smyrna were suffering persecution because they were serving the Lord.
  - a. The Lord did not remove the suffering from this church.
  - b. He encouraged the members to serve Him faithfully.
3. This morning we are using these verses to illustrate the main point of our lesson: "God's people are not immune to suffering."
4. The first observation we need to make is that . . .

Discussion:

- I. PEOPLE MAY SUFFER FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS
  - A. It is possible for a person to suffer because of his own actions.
    1. To illustrate, Solomon discussed the effects of alcohol in Proverbs 23:29-30.
    2. Let us remember the law of sowing and reaping mentioned in Galatians 6:7.
  - B. It is possible for a person to suffer because of the actions of other people.
    1. Abel died because Cain killed him (Genesis 4:8).
    2. Some people from Galilee died because Pilate had them killed (Luke 13:1-3).
  - C. It is possible for a person to suffer because of an accident (Luke 13:4-5).
  - D. It is possible for a person to suffer from natural causes such as sickness and disease (John 9:1-3a).
  - E. It is possible for a person to suffer as a result of doing the Lord's will.
    1. Paul suffered greatly for the cause of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:24-28).
    2. Godly living is sometimes accompanied by persecution (2 Timothy 3:12).
  - F. The verses we have read show how:
    1. it is possible for a person to suffer for a variety of reasons
    2. God's people are not immune to suffering.
- II. GOD HAS GIVEN HIS PEOPLE CERTAIN GUIDELINES TO FOLLOW
  - A. Let us understand that affliction can be beneficial (Psalm 119:67, 71).
  - B. Let us use caution when speaking to people who are suffering (Proverbs 25:11).
  - C. Let us remember that God will not allow His people to be tested above what we are able to bear (1 Corinthians 10:13).
  - D. Let us remember that suffering can lead us to depend upon God for strength, as illustrated by Paul (2 Corinthians 12:7-10).
  - E. Let us remember that the suffering of other people may provide opportunities for us to do God's work (John 9:3-4; Galatians 6:2, 10).
  - F. Let us receive encouragement from positive examples (James 5:10-11).
  - G. Let us remember to pray (James 5:13a).
  - H. Let us strive to maintain a positive outlook (1 Peter 4:16).

Conclusion:

1. In closing, let us read Romans 8:18.
2. This is a powerful verse at the beginning of an uplifting section of Scripture.
3. It teaches us that:
  - a. suffering is confined to this life
  - b. suffering is not worthy to be compared to future glory.
4. This message of hope is for God's children.
5. We learn from Galatians 3:26-27 how to become His children.