

We Can and Must Be Faithful in 2021
(Revelation 2:10-11)

Introduction:

1. According to Revelation 1:9-11, John was instructed to record the things he saw in a book and send it to the 7 churches in Asia.
2. In ch.2-3 the Lord had John send a message to each of these churches.
3. The verses we read in ch.2 are from the message to the church in Smyrna.
4. Our lesson is based on the Lord's instruction to "be faithful."
5. We are emphasizing the fact that "we can and must be faithful in 2021."
6. The first point we need to make is that . . .

Discussion:

- I. FAITHFULNESS CAN BE AFFECTED BY DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES
 - A. This is illustrated in the message to the church in Smyrna.
 1. This church was facing great tribulation.
 2. The Lord taught in His parable of the sower (Matthew 13:20-21) that tribulation can cause a believer to stumble.
 3. Regardless of the tribulation it was facing, the Lord called upon the church in Smyrna to "be faithful unto death" in order to receive "a crown of life."
 - B. Two of God's great prophets also illustrate how faithfulness can be affected by difficult circumstances.
 1. Elijah "*went up by a whirlwind into heaven*" (2 Kings 2:11), and he appeared with Moses when Jesus was transfigured (Matthew 17:1-3).
 - a. Elijah demonstrated his great faith in 1 Kings 18 when he challenged and defeated the prophets of Baal.
 - b. However, consider his response to Jezebel's threat (1 Kings 19:1-4).
 2. Years later, John came "*in the spirit and power of Elijah*" (Luke 1:17).
 - a. John was the Lord's forerunner, and Jesus highly commended him (Matthew 11:11).
 - b. However, when John was in prison, he had a question for Jesus (vs.2-3).
 - C. The church in Smyrna, Elijah, and John show how faithfulness can be affected by difficult circumstances.
 - D. We were hoping this would not be the case, but we are already seeing that 2021 will have its challenges -- we must not allow these challenges to affect our faithfulness to the Lord.
- II. JESUS EXPLAINED WHAT FAITHFULNESS IS IN MATTHEW 24:44-47
 - A. This information is designed to help us be prepared for the Lord's return.
 - B. A man put his servant in charge of taking care of his household.
 - C. If this servant was faithful, he would fulfill his responsibilities, and his master would bless him abundantly.
 - D. From a practical perspective, "faithfulness" is fulfilling our responsibilities to the Lord until He returns.
- III. KEEPING CERTAIN THINGS IN MIND WILL HELP US TO BE FAITHFUL
 - A. First, God is faithful (1 Corinthians 1:9; 10:13; Hebrews 10:23).
 - B. Second, Christ is faithful (Hebrews 3:1-2).
 - C. Third, Christians must be faithful (1 Corinthians 4:2).
 - D. Fourth, the Lord will bless His faithful followers.
 1. Matthew 25:20-23
 2. Revelation 2:10b
 3. Revelation 14:13

Conclusion:

1. During the last part of 2020, many people were wishing for a new year.
2. After 2021 has begun, let us be careful about what we wish for.
3. Regardless of the challenges that may come our way, "we can, and we must, be faithful in 2021."