

We Must Be Faithful to Receive a Crown of Life

(Revelation 2:8-11)

Introduction:

1. Occasionally, a hurricane reminds us that Christians must face difficulties, just like everyone else.
2. According to the Scriptures, God's people have been facing difficulties for a long time.
3. However, the Bible also teaches that God's people are able to face difficulties with hope, looking forward to the next life.
4. To face difficulties with hope we must fulfill our God-given responsibilities.
5. In our lesson we are concentrating on one responsibility that is mentioned in Revelation 2:10 -- "we must be faithful to receive a crown of life."
 - a. We will examine the Lord's message to the congregation in Smyrna.
 - b. We will also consider an event in Acts that illustrates the importance of faithfulness.
6. Let us first examine . . .

Discussion:

- I. THE LORD'S MESSAGE TO THE CONGREGATION IN SMYRNA
 - A. The introduction to this message is given in vs.8.
 1. It was addressed to *"the angel [messenger] of the church in Smyrna."*
 2. John wrote this message, but it was spoken by the Lord who described Himself as *"the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive."*
 - a. Jesus endured cruel treatment when He was crucified.
 - b. However, He persevered, He faced death, and He overcame it.
 3. Christ informed this congregation that He was familiar with ill treatment.
 - B. The Lord stated in vs.9 that He knew this church's situation.
 1. He knew its *"works,"* its *"tribulation,"* and its *"poverty."*
 2. He also knew that followers of Satan were blaspheming it.
 3. After informing this church that He knew what it was going through, . . .
 - C. In vs.10-11 the Lord exhorted this church to remain faithful.
 1. We need to point out that the Lord did not remove this church's difficulties.
 2. Instead of removing this church's difficulties, He:
 - a. told this church not to *"fear"* the things it would suffer
 - 1) This church was already facing trials.
 - 2) There would be more -- the devil would cast some of them into prison.
 - b. stated that its tribulation would last *"ten days"* [a relatively short time]
 - c. promised *"a crown of life"* to those who remained faithful

d. stated that those who overcame would not be hurt by *"the second death"* (Revelation 21:8).

D. Tribulation could have caused some of the Christians in Smyrna to forsake the Lord, but they had to be faithful to receive the crown of life.

E. Let us consider . . .

II. AN EVENT IN ACTS THAT ILLUSTRATES THE IMPORTANCE OF FAITHFULNESS (Acts 27:27-37)

A. In Acts 27-28 we read about Paul's journey from Caesarea to Rome.

B. He was going to Rome as a prisoner on a ship with 276 passengers.

C. During this trip a violent storm arose, and there was no hope that anyone would be saved (vs.20).

D. We learn from vs.30 that the sailors wanted to abandon ship, but Paul warned in vs.31 that they had to remain in the ship to be saved.

E. Luke showed in vs.41-44 that the storm broke apart the ship, but all the passengers escaped safely to land.

Conclusion:

1. This storm caused some of the sailors to want to leave the ship, but they had to remain in the ship to be saved.
2. Tribulation could have caused the Christians in Smyrna to forsake the Lord and leave His church, but they had to be faithful to receive a crown of life.
3. We must be faithful to receive a crown of life as well.