

Read Revelation 2:8-11 – Leader’s Guide

1. In verse 8, Jesus reveals Himself as the One who was dead and is now alive. How does Jesus' identification as the One who died and rose to life relate to the suffering of the church in Smyrna, and to our own suffering?

Jesus introducing Himself as someone who had suffered, who was killed, and who came back to life gives Him credibility and authority to address us in our own suffering. Jesus' suffering, dying, and rising also gives meaning and trajectory to our suffering: our pain and suffering has a direction - our death has a direction. It will always lead to life. It will always lead to resurrection.

2. In verse 9, Jesus says the familiar words of comfort: "I know." How does Jesus' "knowing" our suffering transform the way we face our own suffering as Christians?

Jesus identifies with us and relates to our suffering. We can know for certain that Jesus cares so much about us. This reshapes how we endure suffering when we know we are never suffering alone. Our own God and Lord suffers with us. And since we know He triumphed over suffering and death, we too can triumph over our own suffering and death.

3. In verse 10, Jesus commands and assures us to not fear what we are about to suffer. How does the peace of Christ change the way we face our fears and our suffering?

To fear something is to give something ultimate priority and power over you. The peace of Christ allows us to believe that Jesus has ultimate priority and power over evil and sin, over pain and suffering, over death and the devil. We can still feel afraid and that's okay. But we should not fear as though without hope, as though God is absent and uncaring, as though there is no life after death.

4. Near the end of verse 10, Jesus encourages us to be faithful even unto death. How can we be encouraging each other to be faithful even to the bitter end, to persevere even through intense suffering?

We can be present for each of our times of great need and distress. Pray for each other. Love and care for each other. Speak words of hope, encouragement, and affirmation. Spend time, money, and emotions. Shed tears and hold hands. Especially remind each other of the superior and greater reality of the Gospel amidst what feels to be hopeless and defeating.