

SEVEN

Church at Smyrna

Scriptures: Rev. 2:8-11; 3:17; 1 Cor.10:13; 15:58; Psalm 139:1-6.

1. Read Rev.2:8-11. What difficulties were Christians at Smyrna encountering?
2. The Christians of Smyrna were "poverty stricken" yet spiritually rich. How did they differ from the church at Laodicea? (Rev.3:17). How are wealth and spirituality related in Scripture (*are they*)? Is it right for a Christian to be wealthy materially? (see 1 Tim. 6:3-10; 17-19; Matt.6:19-24)
3. Who was responsible for persecuting the church at Smyrna, and why? Why do you think that God allowed such persecution of His people (*ie If God is all-powerful then why didn't He do something to stop it*)? Have you ever felt this way when going through some trial? Share your thoughts with your group.
4. In which ways was the church being slandered? Why do you think slander is so detrimental to God's work? How should we react when we hear slanderous accusations about other Christians? Have you ever been on the receiving end of such?
5. In which way would the words of Christ (in these few verses in Rev. 8-11) be of help and comfort to suffering Christians? In which way are they helpful to you?
6. What are the challenges for us in Christ's words to Smyrna?
7. When you hear stories of the persecuted church, what emotion does it kindle in your heart?