

## OCC Connections Bible Study (Group or Personal)

### Faithful unto Death: Rich in Christ: Revelation 2:8-11

*Read for context: James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:6-7; Daniel 3:16-18.*

**Big Idea:** Jesus, the First and the Last who died and came to life, calls the suffering church at Smyrna (and us today) to bold faithfulness. Though they face tribulation, poverty, and slander, Christ calls them rich and promises the **crown of life** and victory over the second death to those who overcome.

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#### 1) Read the Text

Read **Revelation 2:8-11** aloud.

(Consider also *James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:6-7; Daniel 3:16-18.*)

Ask the Lord to give you courage and to trust Him in trials.

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#### 2) Observe the Text (*choose 2–3 prompts*)

- How does Christ **describe** Himself in v.8, and what does this reveal about His authority over suffering and death?
- What does Jesus **acknowledge** in v.9 about the church's condition?
- What **opposition** is mentioned in v.9, and who is behind it?
- What **warning and encouragement** does Jesus give in v.10?

- What two **promises** are given in vv.10-11 to those who overcome?
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### 3) See the Connections

**Context:** Smyrna was a wealthy port city, but the church was poor and persecuted. Unlike Ephesus, Smyrna receives no rebuke, but only commendation and encouragement. The "*synagogue of Satan*" refers to those who slandered the church and opposed them. The "*ten days*" of tribulation show a limited time. God will at times limit the time of testing (like *Daniel 1:8-21*). Christ calls the church to remain **faithful unto death**, with the promise of eternal life and the crown of life.

### Word Work:

- **First and Last** (ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος) Strong's: G4413- Protos and G2078 - Eschatos: This first and last is to show Christ's rule and reign over all of time.
- **Tribulation** (θλίψιν) Strong's: G2347: pressure, affliction, trouble.
- **Crown of life** (στέφανον τῆς ζωῆς) Strong's: G4735 - Crown and G2222 - Life. Think of how Christ wore the crown of thorns (Matthew 27:29) so that we can wear the crown of life.

## Cross References:

- **James 1:12:** Blessed is the one who *perseveres* under trial; they will receive the **crown of life**.
  - **1 Peter 1:6-7:** Trials prove and refine genuine faith.
  - **Daniel 3:16-18:** Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's faithfulness unto potential death.
  - **2 Corinthians 8:2, 9:** The Macedonian churches' example of being poor yet rich.
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## 4) Interpret (What It Means)

- **Christ is with us in our trials and tribulations:**  
Jesus is the First and the Last. He died and rose again. This reveals the power of Christ; He controls time and life. When believers face slander, poverty, or pressure, we are still **rich in Him**. Our struggles are not wasted; Christ sees, holds, and loves us. The "synagogue of Satan" reminds us that behind opposition is spiritual warfare. Yet our identity is set by Christ, not our accusers.
- **The Devil's tactics, Christ's victory:**  
Jesus speaks **ahead** of the pain: "*Do not fear what you are about to suffer,*" preparing our hearts. "*Ten days*" signals a short, God-bounded test (like *Daniel 1:8-21*); tribulation has a finish line under Christ's authority. Prison, pressure, and slander are the devil's tactics, yet God uses them to **prove** faith, not destroy it.

- **Faithful until the end, crowned with life:**  
Even if faith in Christ costs our lives, **life in Christ remains**. We are secured by the One who conquered death. The **crown of life** symbolizes our participation in Christ's victory (salvation). We **will not be hurt by the second death** (damnation) nothing can separate us from Christ.
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## 5) Apply (How We Live)

- **Secure yourself by trusting in the Lord**  
Place your faith in the One who rules over time, life, and death. Cast your cares upon Him. Count the cost (like the tower builder and warring king). Cast your pebble (choose Him). The reward of salvation far outweighs the losses of this world (Luke 14:28-33). Think of how Christ asks the question of what good is it to gain the whole world but lose your soul?
- **Stand firm in the battle, grow in Christ's strength**  
You have entered a spiritual war between good and evil. Don't be surprised by pressure or testing. Set your heart on Christ. Put on the armor of God: pray, take up the shield of faith, and the sword of the Word. Grow in holiness and bear fruit. Grow your relationship with God and people. Know that the battle is won in Christ.
- **Endure to the end, live for eternal riches**  
Remain in Christ's love and the truth of His Word. Serve as an ambassador of Christ, share the gospel, and live and love like Christ. We are rich in Him. Let us give and serve in tangible ways.

**Ask yourself:** What is God asking me to do today? How am I trusting Jesus instead of fear?

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### **Commitment Log (7 Days)**

- **Pray:** *"Lord Jesus, give me the strength to be faithful. Help me trust you in trials and see my riches in you."*
  - **Plan:** Choose **one** area where you'll trust Christ over fear this week. (Faith over fear!)
  - **Practice:** Daily examine: *Am I trusting in my own comfort, or in Christ's promises?*
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### **6) Pray the Text (Revelation 2:8-11)**

- **Praise:** *"Jesus, You are the First and the Last. You died and came to life. You rule over all."*
- **Confession:** *"Forgive me for fearing trials more than I trust Your promises."*
- **Dependence:** *"Give me courage to be faithful unto death. Remind me, (especially during trials and tribulations) that I am rich in You."*

- **Mission:** *"Use my trials to prove my faith and encourage others. Make me fearless for Your glory."*
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## 7) Life Stage Helps

**Parents/Kids:** Discuss what it means to be "*poor but rich*." Draw a crown and talk about the crown of life.

**Couples/Roommates:** *Where are we facing pressure today?* Pray together for faithfulness and courage.

**Students/Young Adults:** Name one fear about following Jesus; replace it with a promise.

**New to Faith:** Ask a mature believer: *How do you stay faithful when following Jesus is costly?*

**Singles/Widows/Seniors:** Read *James 1:12* and *1 Peter 1:6-7*; write a prayer asking God for endurance.

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## Notes / Questions