

I. THE CONDITION (OF THE CHURCH)

- A. The Church in the City of Smyrna
 - 1. This church not mentioned anywhere else in the Bible
 - 2. Thought to have been started from the church at Ephesus
 - 3. Churches START CHURCHES – It isn't mysterious how it happens
- B. Smyrna information
 - 1. Located 35 miles north of Ephesus – 200K population
 - 2. Smyrna means “myrrh” (bitterness) from a plant
 - 3. Used for perfume and embalming – picturing a suffering church that is a sweet savor to God
- C. Historians place Polycarp as pastor, martyred at stake 167AD
 - 1. Some churches like this today (poor, persecuted, standing true)
 - a. There are pastors in Canada jailed for assembling!
 - b. Tim Stevens – they came to his home in front of his kids
 - c. James Coates – jailed for over a month and still on trial!
 - d. They built fences around church property!
 - e. Artur Pawlowski – ran them off yelling Nazi! Handcuffed in street!
 - 2. But the Great Shepherd has a message through their pastor
 - 3. He KNOWS their works! Their tribulation! Their poverty!

II. THE CRISIS (UPON THE CHURCH)

- A. Satan tried to destroy this church
 - 1. Jesus told them to be aware that it WOULD happen, not that it COULD
 - 2. We live in this mode where we don't want to “be the outsider”
 - a. Satan hates this church and will do everything he can to destroy it
 - b. He will stir up his tools against us
 - c. EPHESIANS 2:2 - “Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:”
 - d. A little boy who rejected Christ or was hurt by a “Christian” once
 - e. Maybe that little boy is now a health inspector in Canada
 - 3. 1 PETER 5:8 – “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:”
- B. Who is the Lord speaking to in 1 Peter 5?
 - 1. We repeat that verse often – and we SHOULD! Stay WARY!
 - a. Satan has considerable power
 - b. But JESUS is GOD!
 - c. JOHN 12:31 – “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.”

2. Turn to 1 Peter 5 and let's see! | PETER 5:8 – 11
 3. Now – who is the audience? | PETER 5:1-3 – Pastors, CHURCHES!
 4. Sounds like our text!
- C. We cannot appease the world because our church will never appease the devil!
1. Never allow yourself to believe that some people are “just mean”
 2. There is a spiritual battle raging all around us for the souls of men
 3. 1 PETER 5:9 – “Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.”
 4. It matters! Our stand on the Bible, assembling together (every time), our standards on music, our standards of dress, our missions program
 5. ALL OF IT – BE STEDFAST! Unmoveable in the faith!
 6. Hold on to what's right and DON'T let go!

III. THE CHARGE (TO THE CHURCH)

- A. “Fear none of these things”
1. Because perfect love casteth out fear – Just listen to these words:
 2. 1 JOHN 4:15-19 – “Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. (16) And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. (17) Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. (18) There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. (19) We love him, because he first loved us.”
 3. And because we are OVERCOMERS in Jesus Christ:
 4. JOHN 16:33 – “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”
- B. “Be thou faithful unto death”
1. Unto not “until” – a real possibility exists that we could die for our faith
 2. That could never happen? Tell that to the Chinese Christians
 3. They just disappear. China has killed 65M of their own people.
 - a. That's 8 times the population of NYC
 - b. They don't just line them up in front of a wall to shoot them
 - c. There's some evidence that they harvest organs.
 - d. Why wouldn't they? People are nothing to them.
 4. Think it's no big deal - a hint of Chinese influence in our politicians?
- C. FEAR NONE OF THESE THINGS!
1. I'm not fatalistic, but we focus on the “unto death” part of the verse
 2. But unless the Lord catches us up, we will ALL face death!
 - a. HEBREWS 9:27 - “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:”
 - b. Since we can't avoid death – why NOT hold out faithful?

- c. The old joke “What if I shoot everyone who wants to stay here and worship Jesus?”
 - a. Now that all the hypocrites are gone, let’s start service.
 - b. Bad joke because it really happened not so long ago
 - c. And that church forgave that young man!
- 3. They are talking about this new “delta” variant and new lockdowns
- 4. We won’t stop having church services, btw. ASSEMBLED TOGETHER.

IV. THE CROWN (OF LIFE)

- A. A reward for a martyr’s death – REVELATION 2:10
 - 1. Many Christians were killed in the past – Foxes Book of Martyrs
 - 2. But also, in the future – REVELATION 6:9-11
 - 3. Given white robes! Here in Chapter 2, the Crown of Life
- B. James also speaks about this crown
 - 1. JAMES 1:12 – “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.”
 - 2. This isn’t a crown to wear, nor the soulwinners crown, nor any other
 - a. REVELATION 4:10 – What did the elders do with theirs?
 - b. REVELATION 19:12 – What does the Lord have on His head?
 - 3. Can I prove that? No. But I want to bring a crown to Jesus! Don’t you?
- C. Don’t be misled – Salvation is not in jeopardy!
 - 1. Same admonition to Ephesus – REVELATION 2:7
 - 2. This isn’t holding on to Salvation
 - a. JOHN 10:28-30 – “And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. (29) My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. (30) I and my Father are one.”
 - b. What does it mean to be an overcomer? Be SAVED!
 - c. “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”
 - 3. What is the second death?
 - 4. REVELATION 21:8 – “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”

V. THE CALL (TO HEAR)

- A. The Holy Spirit speaks to this church
 - 1. Be born once and die twice or be born twice and die only once!
 - 2. We have nothing to fear, perfect love casts out all fear!
 - 3. Be faithful! Faithful to Christ, to your church, to His Word...

- B. The Believer will not taste of the second death – Are you a believer?
- C. Be Saved Today!