

Westwood Baptist Church



Grounded. Growing. Going.

Worship Guide for January 24, 2021

Sermon Notes

Stop Being Afraid – Be Faithful!

Revelation 2:8-11

Out of the seven letters to the churches, there are only two that hear no complaint or threat of judgment from Jesus. For Smyrna and Philadelphia there is only commendation, encouragement, and a promise of eternal life to the one who overcomes. Perhaps the reason there is no cause for complaint is that Smyrna was a *suffering church*, and suffering has a way of drawing us closer to Christ and strengthening our walk with him. The Christians in Smyrna were committed to Jesus, to serving him and honoring him in a culture filled with idolatry, indulgence, and worldly philosophy. For their commitment to Christ, they paid a price. Persecution, exclusion, slander, and death were constant realities for them, as they are for many of our brothers and sisters in the faith throughout the world. And as bad as things were, Jesus told them they were going to get worse, but for those that persevere and conquer, there is the promise of victory and eternal life.

Living in our small southern Bible-belt town we may not think this passage is especially relevant to us, but it is. We can trust the words of Jesus when he says, *If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you* (John 15:18–20).

As discerning Christians, we should recognize “the opponents of Christianity are going to oppose us not by saying that we are wrong, but by saying that we are evil and dangerous—anti-Semitic, anti-choice, anti-woman, anti-gay, anti-intellectual, anti-tolerance, anti-diversity, etc. And they will do this in direct proportion to how public we are about the claims of Christianity.” The words of Paul to young Timothy are also words for us: *all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted* (2 Timothy 3:12). In response to this persecution, we can lash out at the enemies of the cross or we can look up in to the one who conquered through the cross. We can retreat from the world in fear or we can walk in faithful confidence in our King “who died and came to life”. Jesus’ word to our brothers and sisters in Smyrna is his word to us: stop being afraid – be faithful!

Jesus is the Eternal God who defeated death;
stop being afraid - be faithful! (Rev 2: 8)

Jesus is the Sovereign Lord who knows what we are facing;
stop being afraid - be faithful! (Rev 2: 9-10a)

Jesus is the Victorious Champion who overcame through suffering;
stop being afraid - be faithful! (Rev 2:10b-11)

Weekly Discipleship Guide

Sunday

In your journal, reflect on today's sermon by answering the following:

I never knew:

I was challenged:

I was reminded:

I was convicted:

A question I still have:

A truth I could share:

Know

Monday

Spend some time today doing the following:

Read the sermon passage again.

Select a portion of this week's sermon passage to memorize this week.

Write your selected portion and read it to yourself at least 10 times throughout the day.

Know > Be

Tuesday

In your journal, spend some time writing about the following:

Read the sermon passage again.

Write a prayer of response, guided by the passage.

(May include adoration, confession/repentance, thanksgiving, petition, etc...)

Write your selected portion of the Scripture several times to aid in memorization.

Be

Wednesday

Think about this week's questions for group discussion:

How does Jesus' eternity help provide comfort to those who are experiencing persecution or opposition? What about to us as we face difficulty and opposition?

How does this passage speak to the fear that is so pervasive in our culture today? In the midst of that fear, what about the believer's life should stand out?

How does the unveiling of reality, as sobering and difficult as it may be to see, comfort those who are in Christ? How should we as Christians be agents of reality in a world that is darkened and broken?

Be > Do

Thursday

In your journal, spend some time considering the following:

What insights have you had while internalizing this week's passage?

How specifically will you seek to apply its truths in your home/workplace/life in general?

Do

**Use this guide to help you internalize this week's passage & message.*

Westwood Staff

Gerald Hodges: Lead Pastor

Jonathan Taylor: Associate Pastor

Jim Fulp: Counseling Pastor

Jason Engle: Pastor of Students
& Discipleship

Katie Austin: Children's Ministry
Coordinator

Contact Us

336.599.1982

westwoodroxboro@gmail.com

www.westwoodfamily.org

Church Office Hours

Monday - Friday

8:00am - 1:00pm

Other times by appointment.

Mailing Address

970 Leasburg Road

Roxboro NC 27573-5470