

CORNERSTONE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Life group Study – Revelation 3

The beauty of the Book of Revelation is perhaps in its ability to capture the imagination of its audience in such way that that it helps us to look again at our life with the new perspective. After all isn't life more than just going through the motions – paycheck to paycheck?

- What is it that adds significance to what we do?

Following on from last week where we looked at the message of prophecy to the church in Ephesus we are going to look at just a couple more of the 7 churches addressed specifically in John's circular Letter. It is all part of the same letter intended for the same audience and the same purpose so we need to understand what is being said to the churches and why to make sense of the apocalyptic vision that follows these prophetic words of Christ.

Read Revelation 2:8-11

This reference to the synagogue of Satan is most likely talking about the local Jewish community that had outed the Christians. The Christians could be exempted from being forced to worship Caesar if they were part of a synagogue. There was a fragile treaty between Rome and Judaism that allowed them their monotheistic faith. They were allowed to worship one God and since Christianity was treated as a bit of a Jewish sect this worked for a while. Unfortunately the witness of the Christians brought trouble and some of the synagogues naturally wanted to distance themselves from the trouble.

- **What does Jesus promise to the church in Smyrna?**
- **How do you think suffering fits in to God's plan?**
- **Should we be surprised that there is a cost to following Jesus?**

Read John 10:10 & Matthew 10:28

- **How does what Jesus says here line up with his word to the church in Smyrna?**

The other church we will look at is the church in Laodicea. Bit of a polar opposite kind of church to Smyrna really. We think that it is all persecution and suffering in the 1st century; well apparently it wasn't for some Christians. It

would also appear that the churches in the greatest danger are those that aren't persecuted.

Read Revelation 3:14-17

Jesus is writing to actual churches in real places facing real life issues – issues that we can relate to in our day because we are the church in the same world.

Language may have changed, government may be different but it is still the same enemy. Laodicea is famous for a few things – kind of like Paeroa has L&P, Ohakune has the giant carrot and we all know that Dargaville has the best Kumara in the known world. Laodicea was famous for its wonderful black wool, it's medical school and this wonderful eye medicine that was said to cure blindness. It was also famous for its disgusting lukewarm water. The Romans had built an aqueduct to channel water from a hot spring about 8 miles away that by the time the water got to Laodicea it was warm mineral water.

- **What stands out to you about the church in Laodicea as Jesus sees it?**
- **Why do you think compromise with the Empire is frowned upon by Jesus?**
- **Are material possessions and wealth a sign of God's blessing?**

Read Revelation 3:18-20

- **What is it that you enjoy most about church?**
- **How do you think we can include Jesus more in a Sunday gathering?**

Revelation 3:21-22

Jesus wants His church; He wants us His people to overcome the world. To be different to it. Everything he is saying to the churches in these prophetic messages is so that we can respond appropriately where we are at. The church in Syria may be more like the church in Smyrna than we are and we may be more like the church in Laodicea now.

To him who has been given much - much is expected - Luke 12:48