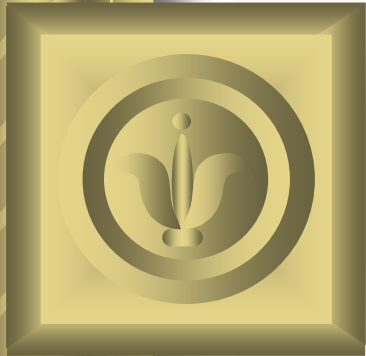


Are We a Suffering Church?



**Series: What Kind of
Church Are We?**

September 11, 2011

A Decade of Change

September 11, 2001





2000 years ago...

...Jesus said, “If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.”

John 15:18-19



The attack...

*...on America was not **politically** motivated. It was done in the name of **religion.***

Jesus also said...

“ Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you;”

John 15:20



In other words...

*...if Jesus' enemies
tried to take him out
in the name of
religion, we should
not be surprised if
our enemies try to
take us out in the
name of religion.*

A Final Word...

*...Jesus said, “**These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”***



Introduction

Suffering is a part of everyday life.

It was true for the church at Smyrna...it is true for the church today.



But, can we look...

***...at what Jesus said
to the suffering
church at Smyrna
and draw
encouragement for
the suffering church
today?***

Two main issues...

- **...plagued the church at Smyrna.**
 - **First, they were surrounded by a community of idol worshippers.**
 - **Second, they were being harassed by people who claimed to be insiders but who were really outsiders.**

A Suffering
church....
...can take
comfort in
the fact that
*God is in
control*



Revelation 2:8

- **“And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: *The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life, says this:*”**

***A Suffering
church...***

**...can take comfort in
the fact that God
knows what we are
going through.**



Revelation 2:9

- ““I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.”

We are rich...

- **“Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has *blessed us with every spiritual blessing* in the heavenly *places* in Christ,” (Eph. 1:3)**

We are rich...

- “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the ***riches of His grace*** which He lavished on us.,” (Eph. 1:7-8a)

**A Suffering Church can
take comfort in its
freedom to choose....**

Faith

or

Fear

Revelation 2:10-11

- **“Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.”**