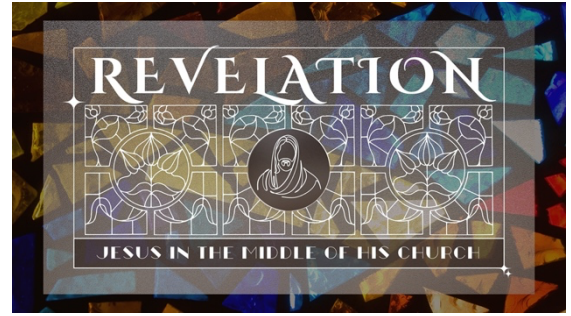


REVELATION

JESUS IN THE MIDDLE OF HIS CHURCH

Faith Under Pressure



Big Idea:

Jesus calls us to keep our faith under pressure.

Opening Question:

What season in your life felt most carefree? Why do you think this was a carefree season?

In this series we will look at the revelation Jesus gave to John specifically for 7 existing churches. And we will discover that what Jesus says to these churches also applies to us today

In most of Jesus' messages to the 7 churches, he gave them some constructive feedback, and it sounded like this... "this is what I have against you." Ouch!

1. Share a time when someone gave you some feedback. Are you mostly open to feedback or do you resist it?

What is unique about the passage we are looking at today, is Jesus did **not** have anything "against" the church of Smyrna.

READ Revelation 2:8-11

2. What do you notice about these verses? What questions do you have?

Jesus said to the church of Smyrna, "*I know your suffering.*"

3. How does it make you feel that Jesus knows your suffering? What current or past "suffering" are you grateful that Jesus is aware of?
4. Why do you think Jesus did not lift the suffering of the church of Smyrna?
5. Have you seen Jesus lift suffering in your life?
6. Is there a difference between suffering because we are human and life is hard, and suffering because of our faith?
7. What does "suffering because of our faithfulness to Jesus" look like in our moment in time and in our location in the world? How do you think suffering for faith is different in other locations in the world?

All who desire to live godly lives will be persecuted... 2 Timothy 3:12

8. Share a specific story of feeling under pressure because of your decision to follow the ways of Jesus over the ways of culture.

Those who follow Jesus will choose his kingdom over the reigning empire.

9. What does the above statement mean for us in our cultural moment?

Here are some ways we can respond to the pressure we feel because of our faith in Jesus:

- Do not panic
- Remember it's a test
- Remind yourself that Jesus has authority over the pressure
- Celebrate that you will receive a crown of life

10. Which of the above responses comes most naturally to you and which is most challenging?

MICRO GROUP

Get into smaller micro-groups of 3 or 4 for the remainder of this discussion guide. Keep these same micro groups throughout this series.

11. Pick one of the above responses to pressure you feel because of your faith. How can you lean into this response this week? Share with the group.

Pray for each other.

H2O – Habits to Outcome

Spiritual habits (Bible engagement, prayer, community, journaling, serving, sabbath, silence and solitude, etc.) help us to encounter Jesus. Every encounter with Jesus has the potential for **Character Transformation*** and **Calling Activation***. This series will focus on the spiritual habit of **Obedience to Jesus**.

Challenge:

Practice listening to God and doing what he says. Set aside a few minutes a day to sit in silence and ask God to show you something he wants you to know and or do.

***Character Transformation** means that your character is demonstrating the fruits of the Spirit as you become more like Jesus. (Galatians 5:22-23)

***Calling Activation** means that you are living out your primary calling as a disciple maker. (Matthew 28:19-20)