

Morning Sermon May 23, 2021
"Jesus Knows" – Revelation 2:8-11

I. Jesus' introduction, He is the One in the Know –

⁸ "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, 'These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life: Revelation 2:8 (NKJV)

1. When Jesus introduces Himself as "the First and the Last" He is introducing Himself as eternal God, One Who knows everything! One Who created time and is outside of it.
2. When He says about Himself - "who was dead, and came to life" He is putting Himself forward as One with EXPERIENCE; about death, even suffering and death, Jesus can say, 'been there done that.'
3. This is important because at least some of the people He is writing to, people in Smyrna, will die violent deaths, at the hands of wicked men. I could not speak with experience to this, but Jesus was dead, and came to life – Revelation 2:8

II. Jesus knew death and life, He knew the people in Smyrna, He also knew their enemies -

⁹ "I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Revelation 2:9 (NKJV)

There are three things listed here that Jesus knew about the members of the church at Smyrna, which He also knows about others:

1. He knew their works –
 - A. Works here is an extremely broad term. It can refer to a variety of things. James, in James 2:21, tells us that Abraham's offering up of his son Isaac, in obedience to God's command was a "work." He credits Rahab with a "work" as well when she received and protected God's spies – James 2:25.

B. According to Jesus, works might even include the smallest things –

⁴² And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward." Matthew 10:42 (NKJV)

Note, Jesus is telling us He rewards us for even the smallest thing, note He knew Ephesus' works as well – ² "I know your works, ... Revelation 2:2 (NKJV)

C. He knows and remembers every good work that we do, and He credits them to our account, reward-wise –

¹⁰ For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, *in that* you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. Hebrews 6:10 (NKJV)

2. He also knew their tribulation -

θλίψις, Thilepsis - trouble that inflicts distress, oppression, affliction, tribulation

A. It is the same word John uses in chapter 1 -

⁹ I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. John 1:9 The Scripture uses the word "tribulation" to describe the time between Christ's first and second coming.

B. And that Jesus uses in John 16 –

³³ These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." John 16:33

C. Most of it probably caused by the world's hate, due to Christ-likeness –

¹⁸ "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you. John 15:18; 2 Timothy 3:12; & Acts 5:40-42.

D. Christ knew the world's hatred and tribulation because He had experienced it, and He sympathizes –

¹⁵ For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as we are, yet without sin. Hebrews 4:15 (NKJV)

3. *He knew their poverty, but also that they were rich – Smyrna was a wealthy town, yet their wealth was limited by the Roman Government, if you were willing to worship the Roman Emperor, and other Roman deities, you were able to participate in that wealth. The Jews in Smyrna could practice their own faith, yet they also tipped the hat to the Roman deities when it benefitted them financially.*

4. *Jesus knew the truth about the church at Smyrna’s enemies – ... and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Revelation 2:9 B Read of Jesus’ experience with this kind of person in John 8:30-47...*

- A. *Blasphemy, is slander, lying to hurt someone, but the word “blasphemy” is usually used about slander against God ...*
- B. *Here it is likely the people at the church at Smyrna who are being slandered, and yet Christ counts this as against Himself and His Father!*
- C. *Satan is the adversary, of God and Christ, and his followers were the adversaries of the poor people in the Smyrna church, Jesus is letting them know He is on their side –*

³¹ **What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? Romans 8:31 (NKJV)**

III. *Jesus knows the future of these people, because He controls it –*

¹⁰ **Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. Revelation 2:10**

- 1. *He knows their future, and controls their future, otherwise He could not tell them, Do not fear...*
- 2. *The devil’s power is limited, if he had power, all of them would be thrown in prison or killed, but only some are –*
- 3. *This is a test that you may be tested*
- 4. *Satan brought Job’s trials as well, but they too were a test –*

¹⁰ **But He knows the way that I take; When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold. Job 23:10 (NKJV) He knows what we can handle - 1 Corinthians 10:13**

A. *Satan wanted Job to do what Job’s wife said –*
⁹ **Then his wife said to him, “Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!” Job 2:9 (NKJV)**

B. *But Job knew the trial was ultimately from God –*
¹⁰ **But he said to her, “You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?” In all this Job did not sin with his lips. Job 2:10 (NKJV)**

IV. *If Jesus is in control, why does He test His own people with such fierce trials?*

- 1. *These trials improve us, make us more Christ-like - come forth as gold. Job 23:10 (NKJV) More Christ-like – Romans 8:28-29*
- 2. *God justly allows these trials because of sin – Romans 3:10-11, Romans 3:23; 1 Peter 4:17-19*

“There is some good in the godly, therefore the wicked afflict them; there is some evil in them, therefore God afflicts them.” Thomas Watson

- 3. *Our victories in and over fierce trails glorify God, because it is Christ’s love that sustains us –*

³⁵ **Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?**
³⁶ **As it is written: “For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.”** ³⁷ **Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.** ³⁸ **For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:35–39 (NKJV)**

- 4. *Overcoming these trials gains God’s people the crown of life, they will not be hurt by the second death –*

... Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. :10B
¹¹ **“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.”**
Revelation 2:11 (NKJV) See also Luke 12:4-5

Arnold Breivick