

Smyrna and Pergamum: A Pressured Church and a Compromising Church

Ray Stedman

I. Introduction. Text: Revelation 2:8-17.

II. Smyrna.

A. It was tough to live as a Christian in Smyrna because they had to live between two extremes—the warm fellowship within the church and the hostility without of the church.

B. Christ revealed Himself to Smyrna as the Lord of the extremes.

C. The Lord knew their afflictions.

D. The Lord knew their poverty.

1. Riches and fame do not make one happy.

2. True riches are those that come from within.

E. Slander came from the Jews.

1. It is difficult to stand up under slander.

2. We are not to be afraid of what we are to suffer—the devil will even put some in prison.

3. Limitations are placed on testing.

F. If one trusts Jesus in times of conflict and persecution, he can trust that he will never have to face the judgment of God.

III. Pergamum.

A. This church is faced with enticement and corruption.

B. The Word of God comes from Jesus' lips cutting the mind and the emotions, awakening the believer to reality.

C. That Jesus is both God and man is orthodox doctrine—Pergamum held to this truth to the cost of their own lives.

D. However, they were exposing themselves to immorality and priestly superiority.

E. The solution for this is the Word of God.

F. Jesus is food for the inner Spirit.

Application questions:

1. Compare and contrast Smyrna with Pergamum. Which church best reflects your own?

2. Does God test you beyond your ability? Explain your answer.

3. How would you respond to someone who says that all that matters is that a person believes the right things?
