

7 Letters to 7 Churches: Smyrna

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Preacher: Mike Salvati

[0 : 00] Have you ever seen a professional athlete, maybe they are a football quarterback or a hockey player or a boxer? They're kind of been through the competition and they're kind of dazed. Oftentimes you'll see them snort something, smelling salts, and it's designed to focus them. You see it in boxing a lot, in the corner, the manager dealing with a beat-up boxer, snaps open this small vial and it just is a pungent odor.

And it wakes them up. This morning we have turned to the second letter of the seven churches. It's the letter, the message to Smyrna.

And it is smelling salts for us. It's to focus us. If Revelation 2, 8 through 11 were a kind of smelling salts, it would be this stark reminder of what the stakes are.

What one can lose for being a faithful follower of the risen, radiant, and reigning Jesus Christ.

[1 : 29] So this passage, these four verses, smelling salts to our soul. They would have been smelling salts to Smyrna, those Christians back in that first century.

And it's smelling salts to us. Now don't get me wrong. Well, there is a glorious, glorious picture of Jesus here. And there is encouragement for our souls.

But it's against the backdrop of suffering, tribulation. And these four verses are filled with words like tribulation, suffering, testing, prison, devil, dungeons, death, difficulty.

Jesus speaks right into it. And this morning, Christ the King Church, on our fifth anniversary, God is providing us a sober reminder.

The stakes are high. Jesus is worth it. So be faithful to the end. The stakes are high.

[2 : 42] Jesus is worth it. So be faithful to the end. Last week, when we were looking at the letter to the church in Ephesus, I showed you seven common components to all these seven layers.

There is this structure in each one of these seven letters that's common to them all. It unifies them. And this letter to Smyrna is no exception.

There's some little differences, though. And so we're going to start by looking at, one, the address to this church. It's to Smyrna. I'll tell you a little bit about it.

And then John moves to addressing something about Christ. Something about some aspects of who he is that are very purposefully highlighted for this church.

And then we move from church Christ to claim. Jesus says, I know some things about you, Smyrna. And from claim, he moves to commendation.

[3 : 46] It's not as clear as the commendation to Ephesus. Oh, but there is a commendation here. Think parenthesis.

Jesus moves us from commendation then to speaking of a coming crisis. This is where it differs from the other letters. There's something about to happen to the Christians in Smyrna.

And Jesus tells them. And in that coming crisis, he speaks a word, six point, of encouragement. And it's been echoing through the church for millennia.

There's encouragement for us here, brothers and sisters. And he closes with a closing call. All these seven components are designed to be smelling salts to us.

To be a sober reminder that the stakes are high. Your Jesus is worth it. And we're to be faithful to the end. And to be honest, I can't think of a better thing for us to hear on our anniversary Sunday.

[4 : 59] So let's start with this church in Smyrna. A little background. This Smyrna was a city about 35 miles, 40 miles north of Ephesus.

And it was on this circuitous trade route that connected all these seven churches. And so we're moving up to Smyrna. And like Ephesus, it was a port on the Aegean Sea.

And it sat on a mouth to a river. And so this city was an active trade city. Ephesus was about 225,000 people in the first century.

Smyrna was about 200,000. So it was a big place. Two times the size of our city, Kenosha. But here's what you need to understand about Smyrna. They were staunchly, this city was staunchly pro-Roman.

Rome was the imperial authority of this time. It was ruling over a huge amount of the earth at this time. And Smyrna had hitched its wagon to the Rome pony hundreds of years before this letter was written to this church in Smyrna.

[6 : 12] And so if you walked into the Agora, the marketplace of Smyrna, do you know what you would see? You would see t-shirts. Mia Roma! You would see coffee cups.

Rome first! This city was staunchly, enthusiastically behind the Roman agenda. Now, let me just remind you.

About just a year or two earlier, the Emperor Domitian, who was the emperor when the Smyrna church was existing, he required all of his citizen subjects in the entire Roman Empire to once a year go to an imperial temple, walk in, take a pinch of incense, throw it on the altar, and then confess with your lips that Caesar is Lord.

He required it of everyone in the empire. It was a way to unite the empire around him in worship. So if you're a Christian living in this day, you know instantly that this is posing some kind of crisis.

You're going to have to decide whether or not you're going to do that. Whether you're going to compromise and confess Caesar as your Lord, or stay true to Jesus as your one and only Lord. So you can imagine that if you're living in Smyrna in the first century, with this requirement to worship the emperor, you can bet on it that it would have been strictly enforced.

[7 : 56] With one exception. There was a group of people that this didn't apply to. The Jews living in the Roman Empire of the time.

Now it's estimated there's five million Jews living in the world at this time. Four million were living within the boundaries of the Roman Empire. And Rome made a very shrewd political compromise with the Jews.

They said to the Jews living all throughout their empire, Hey, you don't need to go to the temple. You don't need to throw the pinch of incense. You don't need to say Caesar is Lord.

We recognize that you are a monotheist. We recognize you worship Yahweh alone. So just pay us a tax. We'll be happy. And the Jews agreed. Do you know why I'm telling you this history?

Here's why. Romans viewed Christians as a sect of Judaism. So our Christian brothers and sisters living in the first century, from the Roman eyes, were considered kind of an offshoot of Judaism.

[9 : 01] So they were grandfathered into this exception. That they didn't have to worship Caesar. Because they were seen as being part of the Jewish people. Well, that's all well and good.

Until the Jewish people who reject Jesus as a crucified Messiah, rejected them. And so when the Jews living in Smyrna, who rejected Jesus, rejected his church, all of a sudden these Christians of the church of Smyrna have been pushed out of the umbrella of Judaism and fully exposed to all penalties, death being one of them for not worshiping the emperor.

Our brothers and sisters in Smyrna, you're going to meet them someday. They're in a precarious position. What is Jesus going to say to them?

Let's now go from this church. The stakes all of a sudden got real high, didn't they? Let's go from this church now to looking at the Christ.

And to the angel of the church of Smyrna write, The words of the first and the last who died and came to life. There are two things that Jesus wants this Smyrna church to know about him.

[10 : 33] Who he is, the first and the last, and what he's done. He's no longer dead. He's alive. Both are very important.

Both are aimed at this church. That little phrase, the first and the last, well, it's a reference back to chapter 1, verse 17, where Jesus puts his hand on the prostrate John, and he says, Fear not, I'm the first and the last, the living one.

It's a word of comfort. But what you also need to understand is that that phrase, first and last, when a Jewish person would hear that, or someone with a working understanding of the Old Testament, you know what would be popping in their head right then?

First and last. Where have I heard that? First and last. Oh, Isaiah 41. Oh, Isaiah 43. Oh, Isaiah 44. Oh, Isaiah 48. Yahweh claimed to be the first and last.

And in those passages, in Isaiah 40, Yahweh, the great I am, he is saying, I'm the first and last. I am sovereignly reigning over all things.

[11 : 46] And there's no one besides me. It's a huge claim. And so, Jesus is claiming to be God. And that he is sovereign over all, and there's none besides him. Not even the emperor. It's a huge claim. But he just doesn't stay there.

He talks about who he is, the first and the last. And if you're a Christian living at that time, you'd be like, okay, if he's the first and the last, man, he is before me and after me.

He is bookending me. He surrounds me, just like it is true today. But he moves on. Not just saying who he is. He talks about what he's done.

Who died and came to life. You see that there? Who died and came to life. Our brothers and sisters in Smyrna, when they heard that, their hearts would have rose in their hearts.

[12 : 49] He's no longer talking about sovereign control over all things. He's not talking about sovereign control over the devil, or dungeons, or difficulty, or even death.

Well, he is actually talking about death here. He says it right there. who died and came to life.

Let me kind of translate this intention. Jesus is saying to this church, you need not fear death because the one speaking to you has overcome it and has authority over it.

See? Jingle, jingle. I've got the keys to death and Hades. 1.18. Here's what Jesus is saying in this church who's facing persecution.

Even unto death. Verse 10. Here's what he's saying to them. Hey, my people, I was dead and now I'm alive.

[13 : 57] I beat death to death with my death and I'm going to throw death into the second death. death. That's what he's saying. I'm its victor.

I won over death. Jesus is speaking to this church as one from the other side of death.

I've come through and I'm going to bring you through too, Smyrna. I've got you. So how do you think our brothers and sisters in Smyrna who are facing persecution even unto death, when they hear this letter read to them, how do you think that they're going to respond?

I think they're going to respond with the sense of, okay, okay, okay. He is in control. He's won the victory and that translates, those truths about Jesus translate into present hope which translate then into present day courage to press on.

imagine that one day you're sitting at the great marriage feast of the Lamb and you're sitting next to someone never seen him before and you're like, hey, my name is Mike.

[15 : 17] You know, I'm 21st century church of Kenosha and he says back to me, oh, my name is Alexander first century church of Smyrna. I'm like, oh, man.

Alexander, talk to me, man. Talk to me. What was it like to get the letter? Mike, let me tell you, right up to that point before that messenger brought the book of Revelation and Jesus spoke those words, I'll tell you what, I was flipping out.

I was freaking out. I was thinking, we're done. I cannot confess Caesar as my Lord. I can't go into that temple. I can't throw a pinch of incense on that altar.

I can't do it and because we got kicked out by the Jews, I can't do any of that. So I'm flipping out. I'm thinking we got to move. I'm thinking we got to get somewhere else.

What does this mean for my kids? What does it mean for my wife? What does it mean for my livelihood? And then the messenger showed up with the book and Jesus spoke to our church and he said, he said, Smyrna, my church in Smyrna, I'm in control.

[16 : 34] I'm the first and the last. I've won the victory over death and do you know what happened? Mike, do you know what happened? No, Alexander, tell me what happened. He gave us strength.

Two months later, two of my friends got arrested. One was killed. We remained faithful to the end. I didn't know what was happening but we were holding on to Jesus. Can you imagine that?

These words meant everything to our brothers and sisters in Smyrna in the first century. Now here's the gap we need to bridge right now. We hear these things and we're like, okay, they were persecuted intensely facing death.

We don't really have to deal with it as Christians living in the 21st century here in America. Okay, that's good to know. Let's move on. Well, let me ask you this. How do you think the church of Ephesus after hearing what Jesus said to them, return to me as your first love, how do you think they would have responded when they heard what the risen Christ said to the church of Smyrna because they would have heard it?

Their brothers and sisters 40 miles down the street. Do you think they would have responded, honey, man, man, I'm glad we moved out of Smyrna 14 years ago.

[18:03] Man, I'm glad we're out of that place. I mean, Ephesus is looking really good right now. Maybe they would have said that but I think they would have eventually got, I think the pastors of the church of Ephesus would have said, hey, gang, we just heard word from Smyrna that they're facing some hard stuff.

We're calling a prayer meeting. We're going to pray for them. We're going to ask Jesus, who's our first love, that they would keep Jesus as their first love and that they would endure to the end. That they won't confess that Caesar is Lord because he's not. That they would confess Jesus as their only one Lord and deal with the consequences.

He's the first and the last. He died and is now alive. The stakes are high. Jesus is worth it. Be faithful to the end. This past week I saw a video, five minute video. If you want to write this down, I would encourage you to write it down.

[19:15] The website is persecution.com. It's the website of the Voice of the Martyrs. And it's an organization committed to making known the plight of the persecuted church, our brothers and sisters around the world who are suffering directly for confessing Jesus as their Lord and they are there to encourage the persecuted church.

church. This past week I watched a video, you'll see it if you go there, about Christians, four Christians in Pakistan, in Faisal, Pakistan.

And what they are having to live with because they're a minority group in a predominantly Muslim country. It's going to sadden you, but it is going to encourage you.

One of the things that's going to be important for us as a church moving forward, I think we're going to be dealing with our own persecution in the States, mildly, but we need to know what's going on with our brothers and sisters around the world.

We need to know what's going on in Pakistan, in China, North Korea, in Iran, and in Nepal. who he is and what he's done.

[20:40] He's worth it. He's worth it. And then we move from that to the claim. This Jesus, he claims something.

Verse 9, I know, I know your tribulation, I know your poverty, I know your being slandered, he knows all these things. He knows all these things about that church, and about the six other churches, and about all the other churches at that time, and about every church of every time and every place since.

He's dialed into his people. He knows what's going on. He knows the tribulation, the pressure that they were experiencing because they had confessed Jesus as Lord, and they weren't going to waver on it.

He knows the crushing pressure, the suffocating pressure, the wilting pressure, the isolating pressure that comes with that. He knows, I know.

He knows their poverty. He knows that these Christians in Smyrna, he knows that doors were closing of opportunities for his people in that city because they confessed him as Lord.

[22:01] Could you imagine you walking in, you see on the marketplace, help wanted, you walk in, you're like, hey, I'd like the job, and it comes out that you're a Christian, and that shopkeeper says, well, position filled, only to find out the next day your friend who's not a Christian got the job after you.

That's what was going on. No work, only indignified work. that voice of the martyrs, I almost showed it here this morning. What you will see will rend your heart, but it will encourage your heart.

Poverty. Material poverty on account of Jesus. Jesus knows. And Jesus knew that they were being slandered.

And the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are synagogue of Satan. The Jews in Smyrna of this time, who hadn't believed that Jesus is the crucified and risen Messiah, they were slandering, speaking falsely, intending to hurt with their words our brothers and sisters living at that time.

Think about this. Think about, like, the Roman governing officials in Smyrna. They had a 1-800 tip line. And that 1-800 tip line was, hey, if you see anybody not worshipping Caesar as Lord, you just call us and we'll take care of that insurrectionist.

[23 : 32] Well, there was a lot of anonymous Jewish people who had rejected Jesus, calling that 1-800 number. And you know what? On the next day, there was a lot of knocks on our brothers and sisters doors.

Hey, have you confessed Caesar as Lord? Let's go together now to the temple and you can do the pinch of incense on the altar so that we can watch you confess Caesar as Lord.

Slander. But Jesus knew. Jesus knew what was going on. these particular Jews who were claiming to be real descendants of Abraham.

Jesus knew that they were not. That's Jesus speaking. Jesus knew that their hearts, though they were professing to be devoted to Yahweh, they were far from Yahweh because they had rejected Him as the Messiah.

Did you notice the connection between slander and Satan? Satan, the devil, the enemy of our soul, he is the accuser of the brethren.

[24 : 58] And what these Jews who had rejected Jesus, they were trying to say in the name of Yahweh, were actually opposing the God of the Bible by causing God's new people, the church, to suffer.

They were doing Satan's work. That's why they're called a synagogue of Satan. But Jesus knew. He knows the pressure that they were under.

He knows the impoverity, the impoverishment that they were suffering. He knows the slander they are experiencing. He knows our last five years and all that went into it.

He knows the next five years of Christ the King Church and all that will go into that. He knows what's coming. He knows what storms are brewing. He knows it. He knows.

And He's the first and the last. The one who died and is now alive. Who gave Himself for us. He claims.

[26 : 07] He knows. He knows everything. For those brothers and sisters of ours in Smyrna and currently in China and North Korea and Nepal and Iran, the stakes are unusually high.

But Jesus is worth it. He knows. So we're to be faithful to the end. There's a commendation in this text.

It's parenthetical. I know your tribulation and your poverty. But you are rich. Rich in whose eyes? Rich in the eyes of Jesus. Not in the eyes of the world. You are rich. Jesus knows their tribulation. He knows their material poverty.

He knows that they're being slandered. He knows what's around the corner, that they're going to be tossed into prison by the devil and they're going to face death. He knows it all. And He also knows that they are rich.

[27 : 17] What is Jesus talking about? What kind of wealth is this? Jesus is describing a characteristic of blessedness.

Remember the Sermon on the Mount? Matthew chapter 5? Listen to Jesus' words. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Slander. When that happens, rejoice and be glad for your reward is great in heaven. Your reward is great in heaven. But you are rich.

For so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. You see, Jesus considers richness as faithfulness to Him.

That's wealth. That's riches gained in heaven. That little parenthetical comment, but you are rich, is a commendation from the first and the last, the one who died and is alive, to this suffering church.

[28 : 33] He knows that they're suffering for Him. And He's saying, oh, sweet church, in my eyes, you are rich. The stakes are high.

Jesus is worth it. Be faithful to the end. We move from commendation now to the coming crisis in verse 10. Do not fear what you are about to suffer.

Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison. That you may be tested. And for 10 days you will have tribulation. Jesus knows the tribulation, poverty, slandering, their real wealth, and He also knows what's right around the corner.

It goes again to what He knows. Their situation is about to get worse. Here Jesus is once again pulling back the curtain and helping us to see an intersection between what is seen and what is unseen in the spiritual world.

world. The devil is about to throw some of you in prison. The devil. Satan is behind this imminent imprisonment of some of our brothers and sisters from Smyrna.

[29 : 55] Now I seriously doubt that the synagogue in Smyrna or the Roman officials living in that time, that they were consciously aware that they were being used by Satan, but they were being used by Satan.

He's the prince of the power of the air, the ruler of this world, at least for the time being. And the slander of these pseudo-Jews most likely was landing these Christian brothers and sisters of ours, some of them, in a Roman prison in Smyrna.

Here's what I want to help you think about. Here's what this means for us. Satan is real. He's active. And he works on a scale that we tend not to be aware of because we don't see it.

He uses governments. He uses religions. He uses economies. All to oppress God's people, the church. Jesus is out of reach for Satan now.

And so what Satan does is he takes the next best shot. The people Jesus has bought with his blood. This is a sober reminder of what we find in Ephesians 6.

[31 : 12] Our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of darkness in the heavenly places.

And Jesus helps us to see things as they really are. And Jesus knows it all.

He sees it clearly. Now when we talk about Satan, I know that can make some people feel a little unsettled and a little uncomfortable, so let me just remind you of something.

Our risen Jesus, he's already been given dominion over all things. It's every square inch of this planet is his. By virtue of his work on the cross and his resurrection, it's all his now.

It's been handed to him. But the devil is real. And he's on a rampage right now. He knows his days are numbered. So here's where we live right now. The cosmic conflict between God and the devil is real, but it's not a standoff between two equally matched opponents.

[32 : 24] Jesus has already decisively won the victory over sin, death, and the devil. His kingdom of grace is boots on the ground now, and his saving reign is spreading to the nations.

So his reign has already begun, but his reign has not yet been fully realized. But there's a coming a day when it will be.

And we're living between the already and the not yet. And in the meantime, there is a spiritual street fight going on beyond our typical eyes can see.

The devil will not relinquish what once he thought was his.

So here's what this means. Christ's church will suffer until Jesus returns.

[33 : 31] That's what this means. We're in a street fight. The stakes are high. Jesus is worth it.

Be faithful to the end. On one level, Satan is wreaking real havoc on real people, real churches, because he hates the church of Christ, because he hates Christ.

But on another level, God is using Satan's schemes for his kingdom purposes. Has anybody else been feeling something as we've been reading this?

Maybe you just haven't put words on it. It goes something like this. Okay, I'm reading Jesus saying to this church, do not fear what you're about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you'll have tribulation.

Be faithful unto death. Can I just ask a question, Jesus? Why are you letting this happen? Why are you letting your people be thrown into prison by the devil and then face death?

[34 : 44] Why are you letting this happen, Jesus? Why do we have brothers and sisters right now in prison in China, North Korea, Iran, Nepal?

Why? Anybody want to know why? Why? The answer's in the text. that you may be tested.

It's purposed. There be imprisoned. Jesus letting it happen is purposed. So let's take a step back and I want to help you understand the purpose.

Jesus was using the Jews of Smyrna, the Romans of Smyrna, even Satan's schemes in Smyrna to carry out the advance of his kingdom of grace.

Here's what you need to know. The suffering of the church of Christ is not an obstacle to the advance of the kingdom. The suffering of the church of Christ is a means to the advance of the gospel.

[35 : 54] Our brothers and sisters around the world, suffering, it's not taken by Jesus' surprise.

it's not outside of his will. It's part of his purpose. The Lord orchestrating events so that Christians, that their faith in him proves true and as they remain faithful to their confession that Jesus is the Lord, do you know what happens?

Guards hear the gospel. People in positions of authority hear about Jesus. If you follow what happened to Paul in the book of Acts, you will see that his suffering served a kingdom proclamation purpose.

Jesus uses persecution of his people in order to purify them and to proclaim his kingdom. it's a package. Years ago, I was listening to WNBI and I heard it was either a Cambodian or Vietnamese pastor being interviewed.

He was for decades a pastor of a persecuted church in his country. He himself had suffered greatly and his church had suffered much and when the host, the American host asked this man, hey, what can we be praying for you for?

[37 : 49] Do you know what this guy said? I will never forget it. Don't ask God to stop the persecution. I'm like, what is he saying?

And then he said this, God uses the persecution of his people like the tightening of a violin string so that the persecuted church could add a minor key to the praise of the risen and reigning Jesus Christ.

God uses persecution of his people to prove them and purify them in order for him to proclaim the kingdom through them.

Do you know what the pressure of persecution produces in the people of Christ? Praise. How glorious and worthy our risen and radiant and risen Lord truly is and when you put that praise and throw in the backdrop of that dungeons and the devil and difficult and death you've got a shocking testimony.

Crisis is coming church saying to his Smyrna Christians this crisis is actually the risen Christ purifying his people and using them to proclaim his glory.

[39 : 31] The stakes are high Jesus is worth it be faithful to the end we come to the encouragement verse 10 do not fear what you're about to suffer be faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life he says don't fear and we think okay okay there's the difficulty there's the devil who's going to throw us into a dungeon and then there is the whole death thing I mean really what's not to fear what's not to fear and Jesus says do not be fearing do not be fearing what's coming Jesus why are we not to be fearing what's coming he says be faithful unto death be faithful to me unto death to not compromise to not shrink back to not step out and hide to not compromise to be faithful unto Jesus unto death

Jesus Jesus is our king he rules our heart we're not to fear the devil or difficulty or dungeons or death because because he is the first and the last because he has victory over death and he is promised to give the crown of life to all those who are faithful to the end that crown of life was a laurel wreath that we're giving to victors in the Olympic Games you won a race you get a laurel wreath put around your head and so here's what Jesus is saying here hey if you are to die in Smyrna do you know how I think about that Jesus thinks about that as a W as a win for him and the reward is a crown of life that word life describes the nature of the crown it is everlasting life in symbol

I've bought you with my blood be faithful to the end and I will crown you with the life I've promised so when remember who's saying this the first and the last he's sovereign over all even every persecution on earth he is the one who died and who came to life he is uniquely qualified to hand out a crown of everlasting life he himself died and was raised this is Christ's encouragement to us do not fear be faithful to me until death happy anniversary Christ the King Church the stakes are high Jesus is worth it be faithful to the end the closing call verse 11 he who has an ear let him hear hear what the spirit says to the churches the one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death first there's the call to heed what he's saying take to heart what I'm saying church take to heart be sobered but be encouraged

I'm risen radiant and rainy but then there's the call to overcome like the crown of life it's got a promise attached to it the one who conquers the one who is faithful unto death unto the end will not be hurt by the second death last week the one who conquers in Ephesus is the one who keeps Jesus as their first love and they will eat of the tree of life in paradise now the one who conquers who's faithful to Jesus in the face of persecution all the way to the end they are promised that they will not be hurt by the second death now what is the second death Revelation chapter 20 verse 14

the second death is the lake of fire the ultimate eternal death and what we learn from chapter 20 in Revelation is that the devil in his demons the false prophet and the beast the anti-trinity they're going to get tossed into the lake of fire we also learn that death itself gets thrown into the second death the lake of fire we also learn that all who have not bound the knee to Jesus and have not been faithful to the end their names are not in the book of life they'll get thrown into the lake of fire too in fact do you know what else gets thrown into the lake of fire all dungeons in the old earth get thrown into the lake of fire because there's no dungeons in the new Jerusalem but for those of us who overcome there is no chance no chance whatsoever that we will be thrown into the lake of fire because we got a crown of life on it's been given to us by our king who's victorious over death the second death poses no threat to us we're destined for a city of peace the new Jerusalem and when we get there we're going to throw our victor crowns at his glowing feet and we're going to say something we're going to say not to us oh lord not to us but to your name give glory for the sake of your steadfast love and faithfulness in winning our victory over sin death and the devil the second death is no threat to those who are faithful to

[46 : 06] Jesus to the end in the words of one LA pastor those who are born once die twice but those who are born twice die once if you belong to Jesus you've been born twice you need not fear the second death we're called to overcome brothers and sisters the stakes are high Jesus is so worth it so be faithful to the end this is smelling salts for us in the 21st century and I can't think of a better word for us to hear on this anniversary Sunday in fact let's continue celebrate the victory by coming to the table reflecting on the death Jesus won his death over death let's pray

Lord Jesus Christ you are the risen one you are the first and last God would you sensitize us to make us aware even break our hearts for our brothers and sisters around the world and God would you help us to be faithful to the end it's the name of Jesus we pray amen