

Smyrna

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Preacher: David Antwi

[0 : 00] Welcome to Carious Ministries. We are continuing the messages to the churches with our new series on the Church of Smyrna. Over the ages, we've lost the New Testament definition of the church.

As believers, we must belong to a local church, for it is necessary to know and be known. Be stirred up as you listen. Revelation chapter 2.

To the angel, from verse 1, to the angel of the church of Ephesus, write, these things say he who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands. I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not and have found them liars.

And you have persevered and have patience and have labored for my name's sake and have not become weary. Nevertheless, I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

[1 : 12] Remember, therefore, from where you have fallen, repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place unless you repent.

But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

To him who overcomes, I will give to it from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. And to the angel, verse 8, And to the angel of the church of Smyrna writes, This is the first and the last, he who was dead and came to life.

I know your works, tribulation, 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.

Do not fear any of these 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 tribulations 10 days.

[2 : 42] 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 shall not be hurt by the second death. Amen. Amen. Amen. Very interesting text.

As I've been explaining, this letter, or these letters, was sent by Jesus himself.

So, the apostle John was on the Isle of Patmos because of the word of God, according to Revelation chapter 1, verse 9.

because of the word of God, they tried to kill him and he wouldn't die. So, they took him to the Isle of Patmos and then they left Island of Patmos and they left him there.

[3 : 45] And Bible says that on the day of the, on the lost day, I was in the Spirit. And Bible says that and he saw there, he heard a loud voice.

As I taught you last two weeks or four weeks or three weeks ago, in the sense of the Spirit, in the Spirit, hearing precedes seeing.

So, your ability to hear is very important. That's why when we come to church, we hear the word of God. And he says in Romans chapter 10, verse 17, faith comes by hearing because the just shall live by faith.

So, without faith, you can't successfully live as the just. But how do you get the faith? Where is it sold? On the market. Which shop do you go and get faith? No. It is the hearing of God's word.

So, hearing precedes seeing. When you hear, then you can see. So, Bible says that in the, I was in the lost day and I heard a voice and the voice was like a trumpet and I heard him saying, I am the alpha and the omega.

[4 : 59] And the Lord heard a voice saying, I am the alpha and the omega, the first and the last. And what you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches.

Watch this. So, he said, I've got something to show you and what I'm about to show you and what you're about to hear, write it in the book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia. Then, I thought he would mention Church of England. I thought he would mention Caris Ministries. He didn't mention any church name. He said, these things you are hearing or you see, write them in a book and send it to the churches, not the church.

The churches, okay, send it to the churches that are in Asia. Then, he says, Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Titeria, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.

Seven churches and when he was about to say to the churches, he started mentioning the names of the cities in which the churches were. I thought he would have said, no, the name of a church.

[6 : 16] No, he mentioned cities. Right? So, it's like, when he was saying, write to the churches that are in Asia. Where are the churches? He said, Ephesus. Where are the churches?

Smyrna. Where are the churches? Who are the churches? Then, he started mentioning. Then, verse, chapter 2, he started now, let's go on. Before chapter 2, he said, then I tend to see, after hearing, I tend to see who is speaking.

And then, he saw a personality in a gown, with a belt, with his feet like brass, his eyes like fire, burning flame, with stars, seven stars in his hand, two-edged sword was coming out of his mouth. What a strange creature. His head, the whole head and hair were as white as wool. The entire head was white. and the eyes were like fire.

Placing fire. It is a strange creature. So, he said, when I saw him, I fell to my feet. I fell, I fell on my face, or fell, and then he put his hand on me. Then, then he said, you know the meaning of all what you have seen?

[7 : 27] He said, the seven candlesticks you saw, and there was, somebody was in the middle of the candlesticks. The seven candlesticks you saw, verse 20, he said, it's the churches, seven churches. And the seven stars you saw in my hands are the messengers of the church.

Or, some translation would say, the angels of the church. He said, messengers. Angelus, a messenger, someone's calling. So, he said, that's what, then, he said, okay, now let's get to business.

Chapter 2, verse 1. To the church of Ephesus. Very interesting. So, the city he mentioned is actually, he meant the church.

So, he said, now, to the church of Ephesus, why didn't he write this letter to the body of Christ? But he wrote the letters to individual, local churches.

And as I explained, Jesus Christ, when he went, after resurrection, in his ascension, all he's doing at the moment is building his church.

[8 : 32] So, he wrote the letter to the church in Ephesus and the church in Smyrna. And then, when he came to the church in Smyrna, sorry, Revelation chapter 2, verse 8.

He said, and to the angel of the church in Smyrna, write, this thing says, the first and the last. who was dead and came to life.

Now, Smyrna, how many of you have been to Smyrna before? You haven't been to Smyrna before? Holiday, but you've been to Morocco? You've been to Abifa?

You haven't been to Smyrna? Jesus wrote a letter to Smyrna, so you should go to Smyrna. Now, Smyrna, you won't see it anywhere.

But, it used to be one of the cities, major cities in Asia under the Roman Empire. And guess what? It was in modern-day Turkey.

[9 : 39] So, Smyrna was, Ephesus was also there. Smyrna was about just, I think, according to scholars, Smyrna was about 40 kilometers away from Ephesus.

north of Ephesus. So, Smyrna is modern-day Turkey. The name Smyrna, I told you, as I started, I told you, every church, the name of the church had a lot to tell about the state of the church.

So, Jesus addressed, it's very interesting how these letters were written to churches that were then functioning with these conditions, but it was also prophetic to the rest of humanity, the rest of the body of Christ, the church.

So, generationally, the churches across the generations is what the seven letters were addressing. However, they were also incumbent on, or it was, it was relevant to the actual churches, the actual churches.

Now, Smyrna, Smyrna comes from a Greek word which really means mer, mer, mer, M-Y-R-R-H, is that it?

[10:47] Yeah. M, let me just make sure. Yeah, mer. Mer. Mer is a particular, watch this, mer is a particular type of fragrance.

It's a fragrance. they used to use it on dead bodies. No embalming. They used it in the embalming process, but the purpose was because it had this very strong smell.

It's when the body is decomposing, it fights against, like it's, you know what I'm talking about, the smell. So it's like, odor, it takes care of odor or something like that. So, mer was a very important, very strong, and you know how perfume or has fragrance.

You know how you get mer? By crushing. They crush the, the substance or the seed then to get the fragrance out.

They had to crush it. And Smyrna, actually, derived from the word mer. Crush it. So the church of Smyrna was a church going through a lot of action, persecution.

[12:00] But as you are, isn't it interesting, as they are being crushed, something good was coming out. So in 2 Corinthians chapter 4, verse 11, Paul puts it this way, 11 and 12, for we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be made manifested in our mortal.

So as we are being delivered to death, something like, pressure, rather, the life of Jesus is now beginning to even lose out. It's a Smyrna, the Smyrna, the suffering church, the Smyrna, the church of Smyrna was a suffering church.

The church of Ephesus was the first church, the church that has lost its love. The church of Smyrna was a suffering church. And then in Smyrna, I need you to just understand the history a little bit. In those times, Smyrna was like the most beautiful city in Asia. It was very beautiful. It was the center of medicine and center of science.

And they, as I was doing research, I found out that they actually, they practiced all kinds of occultic stuff, religious or, they had so many temples. And some of it was, when you are sick, the medicine, the medicinal process they take you through for healing was, some of it was mixed with occult.

[13:23] In Smyrna, most of these medical remedies were through. So some of the places, some of the temples, you go and lie on the bare floor. And at night, snakes will come and crawl over.

Yeah. It's spiritual. So they were giving to, it was a center of commerce. They had money. Things were going on well in Smyrna.

And guess what? They had a mountain. There was a mountain in Smyrna, which I think is called, yeah, Pagos.

Pagos. And this hill, it was a hill, sorry, Pagos. And this hill, around the hill were all kinds of dotted temples for worship, different worship. And there was a temple that was built, dedicated to the worship of the emperor.

Because those days, the Roman authorities or the Roman emperors were seen as gods. All right? So that was now beginning to bring a problem for the Christians. So you have to worship their god.

[14:27] Caesar. Caesar. So they used to say, hail Caesar. Caesar, Caesar is lord. And everybody must do that. If you don't do that, you are a traitor. So the reason why I'm saying this is, in fact, they used to call Smyrna the beauty of Asia.

They used to call Smyrna the pride of Asia. They used to call Smyrna the crown of Asia. Say crown. Crown. And to the extent that, that hill had temples dotted around the hill, round about, that it looks like a crown.

When you stand on it, it looks like a crown. And everyone wanted to be part of it. And that brought a problem for the Christians. Because they are living in a society and in a city which was very, very idolatrous.

Full of idol worshiping. Full of all kinds of strange gods. And now, these people get born again and they had two problems. They were accusing them always.

It's always interesting how Christians get easily accused. It's very, read your Bible. Jesus was accused without any basis. In fact, when I was studying my Bible the other time, I found out that Stephen, Stephen, the Bible says, they actually got forced, I think, chapter 6, Acts chapter 6, verse 12, 13 to 14, somewhere there.

[15:49] They actually got people to come and falsely say. They stood up at people and elders and the scribes and they came to him and seized him and brought him. When you go down, they actually, people came and gave false accusations and they also set up false witnesses who said.

Against Stephen. It was normal. Paul, the same thing. False accusation. Jesus Christ, false accusations. The church has always suffered false accusations. And the early church, some of the accusations they were suffering.

Do you know some of the accusations, they were accusing them that they were cannibals because they eat communion, the blood. They said they were cannibals. They were eating human flesh. So that was reason enough for them to be persecuted and attacked and killed. Some of the things they were also telling, because not the early Christians, Christians are supposed to love one another.

The Bible said, love one another. You know, celebrate one another and embrace one another. They said, we, the Christians, are practicing sexual orgies in the church.

[16:53] So, yeah, that's because they said love. They are always talking about love. Oh, I love you, sister. I love you, brother. I love you. You have let your wife join their place. Those are dangerous people. So, they were accusing them.

And one of the things they were accusing them of was they were accusing them of treason or rebellion against the authority, the Roman authority. And that Roman government does not take it lightly. If you rebel against them, they will take you out.

And what was the problem? That they said they will not worship Caesar. So, they were forced to say, you have to, in Smyrna, you have to say, Caesar, Hocerios. They said, no, Jesus, Jesus, Hocerios.

They said, okay, take them. They were killing them, attacking them. So, that was Smyrna. But when Jesus presented himself, appeared, when he was, he said, when he was going to talk right to the church of Smyrna, he said, what did he say?

Verse 8 again. He said, to the church of Smyrna, right, this is, these things say, the first and the last. Two extremes. The, was, and what, the first and the last.

[18:00] Who was dead? And now it's like, two extremes. You know, they go out of church and life is so bad for them. Some of them were losing their properties. Now there's many business people are afraid to lose business, so they have to toe a certain line.

Yeah, Christian. I like that man. I've forgotten his name. Last Christmas, he made sure, he fell on a Sunday and he said, that's not open on Sunday. The toys, toy shop, is it toy shop? Yeah.

It's toy shop, is it toy shop? Yeah. And, it became, a front page issue. That is denied before salary. He said, no, it's Christmas, but I do not, open on Sundays.

So I won't. And so they have to find a way of attacking you. If you make a mistake and you, you say, oh, let's say you are in, in high office in, in our country.

And you make a mistake and you say, God willing, they say, what? How can you say that? What do you mean? And so most of us are suffering certain kinds of persecution that you have to, you have to conceal your identity.

[19:14] Yes. Don't mute your testimony of Christ. Yes. Yes. Don't be afraid.

They were losing earnings. There's minor church. So most of them have become impoverished. They're poor. They've seized their homes. It's like when you are in a dictatorship, a country that is led by detators.

They can seize your home. They can seize your factory. They can seize everything. And they throw you out of the house. And in those days, they're still to confiscate it.

So most of them were suffering. Now, watch this. He said, so they were, watch this, the point I'm trying to make it as I run up, the point I'm trying to make it is in the society, it was pressure.

But when they come to church, they found themselves. they were enjoying church. So it's like two extremes. Sometimes you are not sure, should I be here or should I be here?

[20:14] And those of you who like being both, in both places, you are so, you are too in to be out and yet you are too out to be in. You want the anointing that comes from God, but you also want to enjoy what unbelievers enjoy.

Wow. Most of us, the reason why the hand of God hasn't manifested clearly over our lives is because of our taste for the world. Taste for the world.

Worldliness. Worldliness. You love what the worldly people love. We all came from the world, but we have to learn how to sing.

I have decided to follow Jesus. No turning back. The cross before me, the world behind me.

Goodbye world. I'll stay no longer with you. Most of us, just dance because it's reggae.

So it's not really the confession that you are. It's just the music, musicality of the singing, the song. You like, you like the reggae. You are reggae, man. Man, what are you talking about, man?
[21 : 17] Hey, I feel iry, man. What are you talking about? Yeah, man. Yeah, man. Yeah, man. Yeah, man. You know, sometimes when we sing those songs, people come out of their shelf and then they, yeah, man. But they'll go back home and know they won't walk with Christ.

So they were just having fun. to suit their carnal instincts. Wow. The church must be the church. Yes, sir. What's the preaching? I'm preaching the church message. Yeah. Yes, sir. I'm preaching the church message. But, but, but, I didn't like what you are saying.

I, we are not looking for what you like. It's not Facebook for, we are not looking for likes. I pray God will convict you. I pray that Bible said, and when Peter preached, Acts chapter 2, verse 37, they were pricked, they were cut to the heart.

I pray that God will convict you and cut you to the heart for you to stop the pornography, stop the fornication, stop the stealing, stop the lying, stop the, like a daisy, attitude towards the things of God when you call yourself a Christian.

[22 : 25] And they said, men and brethren, what shall we do? I'm believing God that by the time we finish the message, somebody's saying, men and brethren, what shall I do?

What shall I do? So, he said, Lord, what do you want me to do? After he saw that he was the one he was persecuted, he said, what do you want me to do? We don't have to be hearing messages that that and those carnality.

You are busy fighting with other people in the church. You are busy gossiping about somebody's shoes, somebody's hair, somebody's marriage. You are busy collecting somebody's potential husband.

I know they are here. They do that. More than that, church girls are quite interesting. Yeah, they are quite, it doesn't matter whether you are married or not. You'll be shocked to know that it's in church. It's because our hearts, our hearts have not been circumcised. And some of us, your approach, your desires, your, your, your direction, approach to life is really so ungodly.

[23 : 41] Or let me, it's so worldly, worldly mindset. The things that you will pay anything for. Very worldly in our approach to life.

life. Oh, I know you are born again. You go to heaven. But, but, there are consequences. I think, let me finish the text.

Put it back on the screen. Revelation chapter 2, verse 8. So, he presents himself as the one, the two extremes.

He's the first and last. In other words, it doesn't matter whatever you go through, I'll still be around. When it is finished, I'll be there. Hey, don't worry about what you are going to. Semana, I know you are being crushed, but I'm still around.

I was there before he came, and I'll be there after the thing has left. I'm the first. And then, he gave them the hope of the resurrection. He said, I am he who was dead, and now, I am alive.

[24 : 43] I was dead, and now, I am alive. Revelations chapter 2, verse 8. I was dead, and now, I'm alive.

I was dead, and I came to life. He overcame death. He overcame death. In other words, the resurrection life. That's why Paul said that, that I may, Philippians chapter 3, verse 10, that I may know him, and the fellowship of his suffering, and the power of his resurrection, that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his suffering.

I want to know the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his suffering, because if I am living the resurrected life, there's no amount of persecution that can overpower me. Because this man has overcome death.

He's the one. He said, I am with you. I was dead, and now, I'm alive. So, what is it that can threaten you? That's why he had the audacity of telling them, be faithful unto death.

Because I have overcome death. He told Martha, I am, John chapter 11, verse 25, I am the resurrection and the life.

[25 : 57] I am the resurrection. Christ is our life. So, in Revelations, he says that I am him, let me just add one more verse. Continue.

Verse 9. Then he goes on to tell you, I know your works. I know your works. And I know your tribulation. He says that, verse 9, Revelations 2, 9.

I know your works, your tribulation, your poverty, but you are rich though. Maybe I'll pick it up from next week. Your poverty. So, you know, what they have been going through, most of them have been made poor.

It's not because church people are always poor. But sometimes, the area you are operating can hit your business if you're a Christian. It can hit your business.

You may have to shut down your bakery. So, if you are a Christian business owner and you are operating in a society that increasingly is becoming apostate or rejecting God, then that means that you are coming under attack.

[27 : 02] The offense of Christianity is the message. Yeah. It is. It's the message of the cross. That's the offense of Christians. So, if you can, that's why I said that my life assignment is to preach the gospel for the building of the church.

We can preach other things, but it may not be the gospel. It may be a watered down version and a breached version, updated version.

Well, I know your works. I know your tribulations. I know your poverty even though you are rich. I know your poverty.

And I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not but are a synagogue of Satan. They said they are Jews but they are not.

I'll talk about Jews. Jews, Judaism, next week. Jews, Judaism. The synagogue. I'll talk about religious centers and then I'll talk about the crown because he says something.

[28 : 08] Go to the next verse. He says something. In verse 10, he says, I do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Yeah, so the ones you have, your persecution, your tribulation has come already but some other ones are coming.

So, don't not fear what you are about to suffer. indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison that you may be tested. Did you see that? Next week. The reason why they took you into prison is you.

It's not anything. You. You may be tested and you will have tribulation 10 days. I'll spend 10 days. Next week. Why I said 10 days?

What is teaching to do for it? I like that one. Be faithful unto death. And I'll give you. Watch this. Semana was the crown of Asia.

I said, I will give you the crown of life. I'll show you instances in the scriptures where crowns are a reward. Oh man, we are going to wear crowns.

[29 : 14] So the way you live your Christian life is not only salvation but a reward is coming. A reward is coming. Did you receive something? Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes.

Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Thank God for using this sermon, Reverend Dr. David Entry to share this awesome word. If this message has blessed you in any way, please spread the word by sharing it and send us an email to amen at charis.org.

Remember to stay connected with us on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Twitter for regular updates on what God is doing here at Charis Ministries. Stay blessed. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

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