



HEBRON

Sunday, October 6, 2019

Dr. Landon Dowden

BE FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH

Rev. 2:8-11

Passage in a Sentence: The resurrection of Christ fuels our faithful perseverance through persecution, because we know, in Jesus, we will never perish.

The presence of suffering does not mean the absence of God or His will.

- I. JESUS IS NOT GOING TO JUST BUILD HIS CHURCH IN “EASY” PLACES BUT IN EVERY PLACE.
 - a. Jesus does not just plan to build His church in places that readily accept the gospel but in all places.
 - b. Smyrna was a tough place to live for Christ and it still is.
 - i. It was tough when this letter was written.
 - ii. It was tough 50 years later – Polycarp.
 - iii. It’s still tough today.
 - c. Jesus’ plan for the advancement of the gospel is not by us staying safe in our sanctuaries, but by suffering in the streets.
 - d. Jesus does not just build His church in difficult places but in and through difficult people.
 - e. There is no place nor person that lies outside of Christ’s ability to build His church.
- II. JESUS IS NOT JUST PREEMINENT IN HIS CHURCH, BUT ALSO IN HIS CREATION.
 - a. Jesus is the First and Final One.
 - b. The time for honoring ourselves will soon come to an end but there will be no end to the honoring of Christ.
- III. JESUS PARTICIPATED IN OUR FLESH TO BE THE PROPITIATION FOR OUR SIN AND THE PROTOTYPE OF OUR RESURRECTION.
- IV. JESUS KNOWS WHEN HIS CHURCH IS IN PAIN, IN POVERTY, AND IN PERSECUTION.
 - a. Christ shares in our suffering as we share in His.
 - b. Pain (Tribulation)
 - i. We will never suffer for Christ without being sustained by Christ.
 - ii. Though He suffered alone – He will not let us do so.
 - c. Poverty
 - i. 2 Cor. 8:9; James 2:5
 - ii. Make sure we are rich in what matters. (1 Tim. 6:9, 17-19)



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- d. Persecution (Slander)
- V. JESUS HAS A PURPOSE FOR OUR PROBLEMS AND AN APPOINTED PERIOD FOR THEM AS WELL.
- a. Do not fear
 - i. Present imperative
 - ii. Stop being afraid.
 - iii. Deut. 31:6; Lam. 3:57
 - iv. Fear is not driven out by just His promise but because of His presence.
 - b. You're going to suffer – don't be afraid – I died and came to life – the second death won't hurt you.
 - i. The reality of Christ's resurrection (and ours) should move us to risk much for the gospel.
 - ii. Christ's resurrection should not lead us just to praise Him but also to push forward in Him (press on – persevere).
 - iii. He will undo the worst they can do to us.
 - iv. About to suffer – what they were experiencing was going to get worse (but not be the worst) – Jesus did not rescue them from the suffering but sustained them through it.
 - v. Phil. 1:29
 - c. God's providential decisions:
 - i. Smyrna will suffer but Philadelphia will be spared, and, in both, God will be glorified.
 - ii. We do not get to pick, but we get to trust.
 - iii. We are part of a larger plan the Lord is working – He knows what He is accomplishing with our life and with our death.
 - iv. Whatever the Lord decides for our lives we can know is best.
 - d. Appointed duration
 - i. Ten days
 - ii. With Christ, there will be an end to our suffering. Without Him, there will not be.
- VI. JESUS GIVES US A PROMISE AND SOME PERSPECTIVE.
- a. Be faithful unto death.
 - b. "The" crown of life – not "a" crown of life.
 - c. The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death. (Rev. 21:8; Matt. 10:28)