



# LETTERS FROM JESUS

## Worship God, Love the Church & Hang in There

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### Revelation 2:8-11

I have a confession I want to share with you: I love the church. I mean I REALLY love the church. And I have been in lots of different kinds of churches both size, location and style.

Maybe that would be a great starting point. Go around the room and share some of your most interesting church experiences outside of Summit, where you have attended a church service and what made it memorable for you.

I have 3 Thoughts, I want to share with you and have you discuss.

### Thought #1: The Significance of Worship.

Revelation 1:9-10

### A. Worship changes our perspective.

John received the Revelation while Worshipping. Darrell Johnson in his commentary called **Discipleship on the Edge** says this:

*"While on Patmos, John was given by Jesus a fresh revelation of our Lord Himself (1:1). **While worshipping in the Spirit on the Lord's Day** (1:9), John heard a voice behind him, a voice like the sound of a trumpet, clear and crisp. When he turned to see the voice he saw the risen Jesus, the same person whom he had known back in Palestine some 60 years earlier only now gloriously transformed. (1:11-18) while worshipping, ----- that's the key!"*



1. I just want us to consider this for a bit. **John received the revelation while worshipping.**
2. Have you ever received a message from God... any kind of message from God while you were worshipping.

It does not have to be at a worship service or church either. It could be in group or individual setting. It could be while you were out in creation at sunrise or sunset and God reminds you; He holds the whole world in His hands and if He holds the whole world in His hands your life is also in His hands - *It's going to be okay.*

John saw things differently on the Island of Patmos when he was worshipping. **He saw Jesus.** You and I when we are worshipping, we will see things differently, too.

What do I mean? I **don't** mean that whatever issues or problems we are facing will be gone. No! **Perspective shifts your focus** from 'You' to the 'One' who created *All* things and brings us to a place of peace and confidence in His faithfulness even in the quos.

**Reflection:** If you are comfortable share with the group a memorable worship experience and the message you received while worshipping.

### **B. Worship Humbles You**

Read **Revelation 19:1-10, & 22:1- 9.**

*"The Twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshipped God, who was seated on the throne. And they cried: Amen, Hallelujah! .... v.10 At this I fell at his feet to worship him but he said to me, Don't do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers and sisters who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God!"*



1. **We get worship wrong so often.** John got it wrong at first and consider where he was. But, the angel corrected him by pointing him back to God and saying **Worship God! Worship God!**
2. That is where our hearts need to be and go.  
*Worship humbles us! And it is good for us!*

**Worship God, as the angel said to John.**

**Take a moment to reflect:**

What happened to John in the midst of incredible circumstances? How do we sometimes get worship wrong?

**Thought #2: The Significance of the First and the Last - Revelation 2:8**

**A. Jesus Comforts His followers with a Statement of Fact.**


1. Jesus comes along and makes a statement of fact - **I am the First and the Last**
2. This is such a powerful claim for the church at Smyrna. Smyrna was a proud and beautiful city. On their currency they had inscribed: "First City of Asia in Size and Beauty."

Jesus is telling them that **powers like Rome will come and go but He (Jesus) will still be ruling and reigning. No one will ever overthrow Him.**

3. Look up **Isaiah 41:4, 43:10, 44:6, 48:12.**

Scholars say that Jesus is covering both His Deity and His humanity (v8). How can we see both those aspects in scripture?





**'I will make a way  
in the wilderness  
and rivers in the  
desert' - Isa. 43:19**

**Thought #3: The Significance That He Knows.**

*Revelation 2:9-11*

**A. The Church at Smyrna did nothing wrong and would still suffer. V9**

1. When Jesus says "**I know your afflictions**" it is a unique word. The Greek word is "Thlipsis".

Darrell Johnson in his commentary says, "*it's essential meaning is pressure, more exactly crushing pressure. The disciples in Smyrna were living out their faith under thlipsis, under crushing pressure.*"

He knew that they were suffering, and he knew about their poverty. Why were they so poor? Smyrna was a wealthy city. Well not for Christians it wasn't. They were shunned if they ran a business or their business was confiscated. The ruling elite and the Jews conspired together to make sure Christians were cut off from society.

2. Johnson goes on to say, "It's the pressure experienced as the kingdom of God comes up against the kingdom of human beings in rebellion against God."

3. Why is this important to note?

**Two reasons:**

- o 1st - Jesus said he knew what they were experiencing. He knew the pressure they were under and
- o 2nd - He did not make any promise to lighten or remove the pressure.

4. What are your thoughts about that?

Jesus then goes on to call them Rich! Explain that? In our North American society is it easy or difficult to be rich according to Jesus' way of thinking? Why?

**B. What is the hope Jesus gives to the believers at Smyrna and us today?** Isaiah 43:10 - "*I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.*"

Take a moment to read and reflect on the article "**The 50 Countries Where It's Most Dangerous to follow Jesus in 2021**"

*"Every day, 13 Christians worldwide are killed because of their faith. Every day, 12 churches or Christian buildings are attacked. And every day, 12 Christians are unjustly arrested or imprisoned, and another 5 are abducted."* **What are your thoughts about that?**