

96-40

# Hold On!

## Encouragement from Christ When Times Get Tough

2:8 To the angel of the church in Smyrna write:

These are the words of him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again. 9 I know your afflictions and your poverty—yet you are rich! I know the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. 10 Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.

11 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death.

(NIV)

### 1. Christians Have Problems? (vv.9-10)

### 2. Our Comforter (vv.8-9)

A. He is \_\_\_\_\_

B. He is \_\_\_\_\_

C. He is \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. His Comfort (vv.9-11)

A. You Are \_\_\_\_\_

B. Your \_\_\_\_\_

C. This is a \_\_\_\_\_

D. Death is \_\_\_\_\_

E. \_\_\_\_\_

# Discussion Questions

*These questions are provided for your further study and application of today's message and to prepare you for participation in one of our small group studies. If you need more information about when and where CARE groups are meeting this week see the display in the lobby or*

1. Though some would teach that good Christians should have no problems, the church at Smyrna is a classic example of God's people encountering tons of problems just because they were good Christians. The list of problems at Smyrna ranged from non-Christians pressuring them to non-Christians killing some of them. What types of problems have you encountered recently because of your relationship with Jesus?

Reread Revelation 2:9-10. What kinds of difficult and severe trials are taking place among others you know at PCC?

What kinds of difficult and severe trials are you aware of that are taking place in the lives of Christians in other places around the world today?

2. What encouragement do you derive from contemplating the kind of person that Jesus reveals himself to be in Revelation 2:8-9?

- I am "the First and Last".
  
- I am the one who "died and came to life again".
  
- "I know..."

3. Christ states that the Christians at Smyrna who were encountering such difficult times were in reality "rich". If their bank accounts did not reflect this, what kind of reality do you think Jesus was referring to? Why is this difficult to keep in mind in the midst of our trials?

4. Jesus reiterates what James recorded in the first chapter of his epistle, namely that trials should be considered a "test". According to James 1:2-4 what kind of test is this? What is at stake when trials test us?

Describe a time when you think you failed a "test" of suffering.

Describe a time when you think you passed a "test" of suffering.