

Audio Transcript of Sermon
October 31, 2026
The Church in Smyrna

Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Tom Laign with Sabbath Bible Study. At the beginning of the Book of Revelation are messages to seven churches in Asia, what today would be the Republic of Turkey. Last week we studied the message to the Church of Ephesus and found the people did many things for which they were commended, but they were faulted for leaving their first love and were warned to return to their first love. When people do not do what they are supposed to do, we are conditioned to expect that something bad will happen to those people. For instance, if a person is speeding on a roadway, we would expect that person to get a ticket. If a person engages in extreme physical activities, we tend to expect that they are at greater risk for personal harm. Even when Jesus was being arrested and Peter took a sword and cut off the ear of the high priest's servant, He told Peter that if he took the sword he would die with the sword. Matthew twenty-six verse fifty-two.

Matthew 26:52

52. Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

Jesus understood the cause and effect relationships of the human condition where when something is first done, another thing is soon to follow. The insurance industry uses mathematical models to calculate their potential risk based on who the people are and what they do. That's one of the reasons why younger drivers tend to pay more for car insurance and why older people pay for your life insurance. When a cause and effect relationship plays out before our eyes, it doesn't take away the pain from what happens, but we can at least make sense out of it. Between firefighters and police officers, firefighters almost always have a higher favorability rating, because they go into burning buildings and rescue people. Tragically, even with all the training firefighters receive, every once in a while, a firefighter is injured or dies while fighting a fire and rescuing people. The firefighters who die or who are injured are generally seen as heroes. The fact they were injured or died as a hero doesn't take away the pain and suffering felt by the family.

Sometimes, bad things happen to good people. I think of all the children and teachers who have been injured or lost their lives due to shootings and stabbings at schools. Sometimes the children who are injured and die are very, very young. They just went to school doing what they were supposed to be doing, and often when a violent person forces their way onto a school campus, it is a teacher or other staff member who dies trying to protect the students. That teacher or staff member was also at work where they were supposed to be. Tragically, even though the students and school staff were where they were supposed to be, because of the evil intentions of a violent person, these same students and school staff were also at the wrong place at the wrong time. We can understand when bad things happen to a bad person and when good things happen to a good person, but it can be hard to process when bad things happen to good people.

Imagine doing everything right and still having bad things happen. You are being you and you are doing what you are supposed to be doing in God's eyes, and you still suffer for it. You have done nothing wrong, and you still suffer. A casual observer might question where God's loyalty is to the person suffering, because that person is doing what is right in God's eyes, and God is allowing the suffering to continue. Suffering because of faith and then hearing the narrative again and again that God has failed the faithful follower could cause some to abandon the faith, but for the church in Smyrna, they never abandoned the faith. We can tell from the Bible they had a very rich spiritual life, but outwardly to other people they were financially poor, and they suffered for their faith at the hands of people who believed the lie rather than the truth. The message to them was simple. If they were faithful to death they would be given a crown of life. Let's read the message to the church in Smyrna. Revelation two starting with verse eight.

Revelation 2:8-11

8. And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

9. I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, but thou art rich and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

10. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

11. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

The message to Smyrna is a much shorter message. They were rich in faith, but everything else was hard for them. There was no problem with their works, and they were encouraged to remain faithful until death. They experienced tribulation and were financially poor. They had to suffer through religious blasphemy, and that blasphemy probably contributed to their tribulation. The message added that they needed to live their lives without fear, that they shouldn't fear what they would suffer. It was explained that some would be put in prison and have tribulation for ten days, and prophetically, that would likely mean a longer period than just an actual day, and could mean something like ten years or a different period of time. With all of that, they were encouraged to remain faithful to death, and they would be given a crown of life. The church in Smyrna did what they were supposed to do, and God allowed financial poverty and persecution to come their way. Their reward was not for this world, but would be in eternal life to come.

The works of the church in Smyrna was the first thing mentioned, and in the Bible, there are passages from different New Testament books which can cause some doubt about the role of works in our lives. James wrote about works, and even though in the New Testament, the Book of James appears to the rear of the New Testament, it was probably the earliest book chronologically. James asked if faith without works could save a person. He went on to compare that encountering a person who was hungry and not wearing clothes appropriate for the season, and then telling that person to be warmed and filled and depart in peace, without actually helping them. Some read this passage and conclude these are the types of works we are to have, and there is nothing wrong in helping a person in need, and as we are able to help people in need, we need to help those people. James used the example of the hungry person as an example to link faith and works. What James was showing was we cannot be a person of faith believing in God, and then doing all those things that are opposed to God. He correctly showed faith must be more than belief, because even the demons believe and tremble. Unlike Christians who also believe and should be doing what God expects, the demons believe, but they don't do what God expects. Abraham believed God and he also did what God expected, and Rahab helped the spies get away. If we say we have faith and believe God, we need to be doing what God expects of us. James two verse fourteen.

James 2:14-26

- 14. What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?**
- 15. If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,**
- 16. And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?**
- 17. Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.**
- 18. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.**
- 19. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.**
- 20. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?**
- 21. Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?**
- 22. Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?**
- 23. And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.**
- 24. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.**
- 25. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?**
- 26. For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.**

If we say we believe in God, we will maintain good works. In other words, we will continue to do what God expects of us knowing that God has established His laws because these are best for mankind. What we shouldn't do is think faith is about debating minor topics that only lead to strife and debate. Titus three verse eight.

Titus 3:8-11

- 8. This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.**
- 9. But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.**
- 10. A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject;**

11. Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

Hebrews shows us that it is through every good work aligned to God's will that we come to spiritual perfection. Hebrews thirteen verse twenty.

Hebrews 13:20-21

20. Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

21. Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Sometimes in the faith we may feel lonely, because sometimes it seems like what is evil in this world overpowers what is good. When we feel lonely, we can take comfort knowing that God is not unrighteous to forget our work and labor of love. Hebrews six verse nine.

Hebrews 6:9-12

9. But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.

10. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

11. And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:

12. That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Paul reminded Timothy that those who are rich cannot think that they can buy salvation and should like everyone else trust in God, and like everyone else to do good works. Because the rich are rich, they should strive to be rich in good works, so their spiritual richness exceeds their physical riches. They should also be ready to share of the bounty given to them by God. First Timothy six verse seventeen.

1 Timothy 6:17-19

17. Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

18. That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

19. Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

Paul reminded the Ephesians that they had been given the opportunity for eternal life even though they once lived a life of sin that leads to death. Even though they might have been influenced by Satan like many other people, they were reminded of the mercy that God showed them, and of their heavenly calling. That opportunity for eternal life is a gift given to us through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and because Jesus paid such a high price for us, we need to remember that we were spiritually renewed by Jesus to do good works. Ephesians two verse one.

Ephesians 2:1-10

1. And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

2. Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

3. Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

4. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

5. Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, by grace ye are saved;

6. And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

7. That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

8. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

9. Not of works, lest any man should boast.

10. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

The church in Smyrna was praised for their works, and those works were done during a time of tribulation. When times are great, it is easy to do great things. When we are allowed to freely live our lives it is easy to do what God expects. The church in Smyrna did what was expected by God even when they suffered tribulation. Often, when we think of tribulation, we immediately jump to the great tribulation, a time of intense trouble shown in many Bible verses to occur in the end time. The Greek word for tribulation is also translated as affliction, and today we would think of an affliction as a lingering medical condition, or ongoing hardship. When James wrote of true religion as visiting the widows and orphans in their affliction, he used the same Greek word for tribulation. James one verse twenty-six.

James 1:26-27

26. If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridled his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.

27. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

Widows can be very poor, and for children growing up in the foster care system today, the number one housing arrangement for them after they leave care is homelessness, meaning they are also very poor. Even though they were financially poor, the church in Smyrna was praised for being spiritually rich. When Paul wrote his second letter to the Corinthians, he reminded them of the blessings given to the churches of Macedonia. He shared that they endured a great trial of affliction with deep poverty, and yet their joy remained, and they still found ways to share what they had. Second Corinthians eight verse one.

2 Corinthians 8:1-5

1. Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia;

2. How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.

- 3. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves;**
- 4. Praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.**
- 5. And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.**

He also reminded them whatever affliction we currently have; we should consider it to be a light affliction and not faint knowing eternal life awaits us. Instead of being solely focused on the hardships of today, we look to the Kingdom of God to come. Second Corinthians four verse sixteen.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

- 16. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.**
- 17. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;**
- 18. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.**

The Thessalonians were reminded that when they received the word of God, that came during a time when they experienced a great deal of affliction. Even suffering that great deal of affliction, they turned from serving idols to serving God our Father. First Thessalonians one verse two.

1 Thessalonians 1:2-10

- 2. We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;**
- 3. Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;**
- 4. Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.**
- 5. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.**
- 6. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:**

- 7. So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.**
- 8. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak anything.**
- 9. For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;**
- 10. And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.**

Paul taught the Romans to rejoice in hope, hope of eternal life to come while being patient in tribulation, enduring to the end to be saved. Romans twelve verse nine.

Romans 12:9-12

- 9. Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.**
- 10. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;**
- 11. Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;**
- 12. Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;**

He also reminded them that when all things look lost and that only horrible and bad things lay ahead, they should consider if any of that could separate them from the love of Christ. He adamantly shared that nothing, not even tribulation, could separate us from the love of Christ. Romans eight verse thirty-one.

Romans 8:31-39

- 31. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?**
- 32. He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?**
- 33. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.**
- 34. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.**
- 35. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?**

36. As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

37. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

38. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39. Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The church in Smyrna was a spiritually rich church that lived in financial poverty. They didn't have much that would impress people who only know the life we now have, but they had the spiritual riches that would bring them to eternal life. We should consider that Jesus who died so our sins could be forgiven was very rich as the Son of God, and became poor living as a man so that through His poverty, we could become rich. Second Corinthians eight verse seven.

2 Corinthians 8:7-12

7. Therefore, as ye abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also.

8. I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love.

9. For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

10. And herein I give my advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago.

11. Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have.

12. For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.

Some people focus on one's financial situation like it is a sign of God's blessing and a vindication that they must be doing right by God. We should never discount the blessings of God, but God does not need us to be financially rich to bring credibility to the gospel of the Kingdom of God. Instead we should consider the words of Paul in his second letter to the Corinthians who were reminded that even though times could be very tough, we should not use a poorer financial

status as an excuse to not do what God would expect of us. Even when we are financially poor, God can still use us to help others become spiritually rich, and that combination of financial poverty and spiritual riches was the fate of the church in Smyrna. Second Corinthians six verse three.

2 Corinthians 6:3-10

- 3. Giving no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed:**
- 4. But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,**
- 5. In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings;**
- 6. By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned,**
- 7. By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,**
- 8. By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true;**
- 9. As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed;**
- 10. As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.**

The church in Smyrna was praised for being spiritually rich. Some incorrectly equate financial wealth with spiritual wealth. These are people who believe that financial wealth is a sign that they must be doing what God expects of them. Paul warned Timothy that we should not associate with such people, and that spiritual riches come from godliness and contentment. First Timothy six verse three.

1 Timothy 6:3-6

- 3. If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;**
- 4. He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,**
- 5. Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.**
- 6. But godliness with contentment is great gain.**

The Colossians were told to allow the word of Christ to dwell in them richly. What Jesus Christ taught is to embody who we are as people. Colossians three verse twelve.

Colossians 3:12-17

12. Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

13. Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

14. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

15. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

16. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

17. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

Before us is a choice where one must be more important. We can either value spiritual riches or we can value financial riches. Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ as being greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. Today we must value the reproach of Christ as being greater than what is seen as financially valuable in this world. Hebrews eleven verse twenty-three.

Hebrews 11:23-28

23. By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

24. By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

25. Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

26. Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

27. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

28. Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.

The church in Smyrna had to deal with people who were committing blasphemy. Smyrna was a church that took a great deal of abuse. It's likely today we will deal with blasphemy as well, and some of those people will not be pleasant to be around, especially when they attack us for our faith. What we cannot do is become like them. We cannot commit blasphemy even if in our mind we are trying to counter blasphemy done by others. Blasphemy is something we cannot do. Instead, we should seek to do those things that are pleasing to God. Colossians three verse one.

Colossians 3:1-11

- 1. If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.**
- 2. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.**
- 3. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.**
- 4. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.**
- 5. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:**
- 6. For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:**
- 7. In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.**
- 8. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.**
- 9. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;**
- 10. And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:**
- 11. Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.**

The Greek word for blasphemy is also translated as railing. In this usage it implies never-ending verbal attacks, almost like what we see in cases of extreme bullying and political ads. Here is the connection between railings and blasphemy.

Somebody who can incessantly verbally attack another person who they can see could just as easily incessantly verbally attack God Whom they have not seen. We need to be mindful with our words to any person, and especially within the household of faith. If a person has done something that brings or could bring harm, that can be discussed, but there is not a place for never-ending verbal attacks for Christians. Let's go back and reread first Timothy six starting in verse three.

1 Timothy 6:3-5

3. If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;

4. He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,

5. Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.

The church in Smyrna was told not to fear things that would happen to them. When the world may seem to be spinning out of control around us, we can remember where in the Book of Job, even Satan needed God's permission before taking action against Job. God will not allow Satan to spiritually destroy us. He might allow Satan to take our life and all of our possessions, but God will not allow Satan to spiritually destroy us. Knowing that our hope is in eternal life to come, we should not fear those things which will come in prophecy, because there is no fear in love. If our love has been made perfect in Jesus Christ, fear will not be part of who we are. First John four verse seventeen.

1 John 4:17-19

17. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

18. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

19. We love him, because he first loved us.

Knowing there is no fear in love does not mean we are reckless with our lives and property, or the lives and property of others. Remember that when Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness that Satan took Jesus to the top of the temple

and dared Him to prove He was the Son of God by jumping from the top of the temple, and Jesus used scripture to reply telling Satan that we are not to tempt God.

The church in Smyrna was told that if they were faithful to death they would be given a crown of life. They lived a hard life of poverty and persecution and were told to be faithful to death to receive a crown of life. Today we might have a more comfortable life, but we are also told to endure to the end. During the end time as prophecy advances Jesus taught that sin and evil would increase, and many would become withdrawn with their love growing cold. He taught that those who endure to the end will be saved. Matthew twenty-four verse nine.

Matthew 24:9-14

9. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

10. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

11. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

12. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

13. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

14. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

When we think of being faithful and how we will be evaluated as being faithful, we can consider a parable of Jesus where He taught that those who are faithful in what is least will be faithful in what is much, and those who are unfaithful in what is least will be unfaithful in what is much. Luke sixteen verse one.

Luke 16:1-13

1. And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

2. And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

3. Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.

4. I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.

- 5. So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord?**
- 6. And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty.**
- 7. Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore.**
- 8. And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.**
- 9. And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.**
- 10. He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.**
- 11. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?**
- 12. And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?**
- 13. No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.**

The church in Smyrna was told if they were faithful to the end they would be given a crown of life. In his second letter to Timothy, Paul wrote of the crown of righteousness that was awaiting him. Second Timothy four verse one.

2 Timothy 4:1-8

- 1. I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;**
- 2. Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.**
- 3. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;**
- 4. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.**

5. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

6. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

7. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

8. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

Each of us needs to have the same conviction that Paul had that a crown of righteousness was laid up for him. Today we might have an easier life than the church in Smyrna. They were financially poor and lived in poverty. They suffered tribulation and related persecution. Some would be imprisoned and some would die. But like all Christians, they were told to be faithful to death, and they would be given a crown of life, that crown of righteousness that was laid up for Paul. As we live our lives today, we can be thankful for what God has given us physically, but we also need to remember that each of us must be faithful to death to receive a crown of life.

Thank you for joining us today. God-willing we'll get together next time on the Sabbath. Until then, thank you for joining us today.