



The Church in Smyrna

Week Two

Look Back at Last Week

- Pastor Jon in his Sunday, April 4 sermon on the Ephesus church said they were affirmed for their “doctrinal discernment” and “robust perseverance.” How do you rate yourself in these areas? FPC?
- The church at Ephesus was criticized for abandoning their first love. What should be our first love?
- What areas have you lost your first love? Has FPC lost its first love? What steps are you taking – and what steps should FPC take – to return to its first love?

Read Aloud

Passage for this week: **REVELATIONS 2:8-11.**

Head / 15–20 Minutes

OBSERVE THE TEXT AND THE AUTHOR'S MAIN POINTS

1. How does Jesus describe himself to the church in Smyrna?
2. What was the city of Smyrna like? How easy was it to be a Christian there?
3. How are the impoverished Christians in Smyrna rich?
4. What is the victor's crown? How is it granted according to the end of verse 10?

Heart / 15–20 Minutes

ENVISION HOW THE TEXT—WHEN APPLIED—MIGHT TRANSFORM YOUR INNER LIFE IN TERMS OF YOUR THOUGHTS, ATTITUDES, AND BEHAVIORS

1. In Smyrna, Christians were persecuted and impoverished for not following along with cultural norms. Are you willing to give up worldly wealth to identify with your faith and the riches God provides?
2. What assurances can you rely upon when your faith is tested? Is it easier to gain strength knowing that the Christians in Smyrna remained committed to Christ?
3. How does knowing that nothing can hurt you in eternity make you think about your trials today? What can you do to live victoriously today?

Hands / 10 Minutes

APPLY THE TEXT BY MOVING FROM INWARD REFLECTION TO OUTWARD ACTION LOOKING FOR WAYS TO LIVE THE TEXT OUT IN OUR LIVES TO SERVE OTHERS

Reaching Upwards: Growing in Your Relationship with God

- Memorize 1 Peter 1:6-7 and pray that you rejoice in trials. If you are going through something currently, consider asking someone to pray through this verse with you.
- Prayerfully consider what your life looks like when you have complete trust in the riches of eternal life.

Reaching Outward: Investing in Your Neighbors

- Seek out another believer this week and offer them an encouraging scripture verse.
- Think of someone in your midst who is struggling right now and buy them a meal, send them a card, or send them a gift to remind them of God's love
- **Alpha** - Invest in your neighbors eternally by inviting them to the FPC Alpha Thursday evening classes that start April 11 through May 23. **Pray** that God will lead seekers to the class and that they will return consistently; for volunteers to help with the class; for smooth logistics; and for guests to experience the love of Jesus and encounter Him at Alpha. To volunteer, contact Pastor Emmanuel at epaulpeter@fpchouston.org; for more information go to <https://fpchouston.org/event/alpha-evening-3/2024-04-11/>.

Reaching Beyond

- Christians are persecuted in countries across the globe. Consider visiting the Voice of the Martyrs website and adopting a front-line worker for prayer (persecution.com/flw) or using a prayer list for the persecuted church created by Open Doors (opendoorsus.org/en-US/getinvolved/pray/).
- FPC has a number of Local and Global Mission Partners that show practical love to the world. Also, they provide volunteer opportunities to follow Christ's example in service. To sample some of these partners, join us for short visits to Star of Hope Graduation (April 25, 1 PM) and the Landing (May 23, 4 PM). To reserve a place, contact Madie Weir, Missions Coordinator at mweir@fpchouston.org. For more information about FPC Mission Partners and volunteer opportunities go to fpchouston.org/serve/ways-to-serve/upcoming-opportunities.
- April is City Wide Service Month called "Good Neighbor Days". Four of FPC's local priority partners have service days as part of Good Neighbor Days: The Forge - April 20, Houston Welcomes Refugees - April 27, Agape Development - May 4, and The Landing - May 18. For more information about volunteer sign up, here is the link: <http://www.goodneighboradays.org>