

Revisiting the Difficulties of Life

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[*Revelation 2:8-11*](#)

Let's consider: 1) Smyrna was poor – Jesus acknowledged their poverty and their spiritual richness. 2) Smyrna was suffering and was about to suffer more – Jesus simply told them to be faithful and endure.

Jesus was aware of their poverty

- [\[Jas 2:5\]](#) 5 Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?
- [\[Luk 6:20\]](#) 20 And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed [be ye] poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.
- [\[Rev. 3:17\]](#) Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:
- [\[Mat 19:16-22\]](#) 16 And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? 17 And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? [there is] none good but one, [that is], God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. 18 He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, 19 Honour thy father and [thy] mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 20 The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? 21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go [and] sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come [and] follow me. 22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.
- [\[Act 4:32, 37\]](#) 32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any [of them] that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. ... 37 Having land [Barnabas], sold [it], and brought the money, and laid [it] at the apostles' feet.
- [\[1Ti 6:9-10\]](#) 9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and [into] many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.
- [\[James 5:1-6\]](#) Go to now, [ye] rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon [you]. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned [and] killed the just; [and] he doth not resist you.
- [\[1Ti 6:9-10, 17-19\]](#) 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.
- This compliments what Jesus said in [Matt. 6: \[Mat 6:19-20\]](#) 19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: 20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:
- Jesus warned a man concerned about his money to be on guard against every form of greed. He said: [\[Luk 12:15\]](#) 15 ...Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. He then told a story about a man who was so consumed with gathering more money that he died without taking care of his soul. Jesus said that the man *who stores up treasure for himself is not rich toward God*.
- [\[Mat 6:2-3\]](#) 2 Therefore when thou doest [thine] alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. 3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:
- *Jesus commended the poor woman for putting in a small amount, because she gave of her abundance, the rich gave more, but it didn't require a sacrifice* – [Mark 12:41-44](#)
- [\[2Co 8:2-4\]](#) 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 intreaty that we would receive the gift, and [take upon us] the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

and take upon us the yoke of the ministry to the same.

- *The Philippians (also documented as poor) gave to supply for one of their own, Paul* - Phil. 4
- In the same chapter, Paul told them that they would have the power from Jesus to be content ([Phil. 4:13](#)). This is the meaning of "I can do all things through Christ..."
- This the same thing he taught after warning about riches in [1 Tim. 6](#) when he said: [[1Ti 6:6 KJV](#)] 6 But godliness with contentment is great gain.
- *The seed among the thorns was choke up by the deceitfulness of riches*- [Matt. 13:22](#)
- [[Luk 14:33](#)] 33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

Application:

- i. Are you content?
- ii. What is your definition of a need?
- iii. Do you know God's will and are you committed to it?

Jesus was aware of their suffering.

- [1 Peter 4:12-13](#)...Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.
- Jesus promised suffering to the point that a follower of Christ may have thought he wasn't following Christ at all if he didn't face some kind of suffering.
- Peter and John rejoiced after being whipped and threatened by the Sanhedrin in [Acts 5](#).
- Paul said in [Acts 21:13](#)...Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.

Application:

- i. What is the limit of your obedience to Jesus?
- ii. When you do suffer, what is your response?