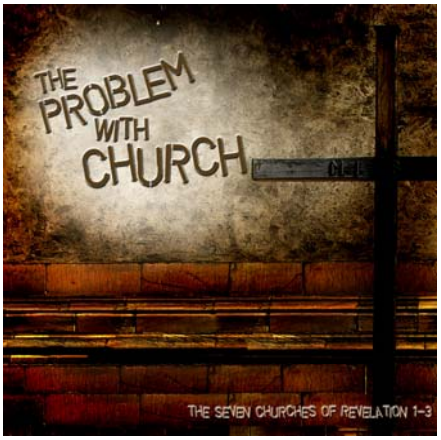

Fight or Flight?

Revelation 2:8-11 Study #3

This is the third week in our current series, The Problem with Church. Once again, we'll be looking at one of the seven churches Jesus addresses & John relates in the first few chapters of Revelation. Ted talked about and we will discuss suffering and its role in the life of a believer. The application to our lives is clear, and our discussion will be geared toward finding ways to put this message to work. That's the point of everything we do. We're all about interacting with what God has to say with us.

Getting Started

Ted addressed the common sentiment, "God doesn't want me to suffer" in his sermon. Let talk about this a little to help us get started.

What do people mean when they say this? When they say God doesn't want them to suffer, what are they referring to?
How do you personally most often interact with suffering when you encounter it? How does it usually affect you?
How does God view suffering in the lives of believers? How should our lives look in the face of suffering?

Read verses 8-11 in chapter 2 before moving on to the first section. Then review Ted's points and use the following questions as a springboard to launch your group discussion.

Jesus understands our suffering. verse 8

His sovereign character assures us that He holds all things together.
His death and resurrection provide hope in the midst of suffering.

Does remembering Jesus understands our suffering comfort you? Why or why not? What does this truth do for you?
How does thinking about Jesus affect your experience of suffering? Does it affect you? How can it or should it affect you?

We are constantly pressed between two realities. verse 9

1. **This earthly reality includes:**
   - **being pressed and squeezed by difficult circumstances**
   - **experiencing poverty**
   - **being misunderstood and persecuted**
2. **The eternal reality is that we possess great wealth.**

What does Jesus mean when he says he knows our sufferings? Does this affect how you think about Him?
Which reality occupies most of your thought in general? How does this shape your life & experience of suffering?
How does suffering affect which reality you turn toward? How does each reality affect our suffering differently?

Fear in the midst of suffering leads us away from God's purposes for us. verse 10a

Why does he tell us not to fear? How does fear affect the sufferings we experience?
How have you seen fear lead someone away from God? How do we combat this fear that comes so naturally to us?

Faithfulness in the midst of suffering happens as we trust that … verse 10b-11

- **suffering develops our relationship with Jesus**
- **suffering is a required path for those who follow Jesus**
- **suffering is rewarded when we refuse to run**

What does it mean to be faithful until death? What is the crown of life we are promised if we stay faithful?
Does this crown motivate you? What do you hold on to in the midst of suffering? Give an example.
What does it mean to "have an ear" and to listen? What will our lives look like if we do hear? What if we don't hear?

Application Questions

Make it a group goal to have each group member come up with a specific application from the text.

In the midst of suffering, ask yourself the following questions:

What am I afraid of? **What does God want to develop in me?**
What is the greater reward?
What are you going to apply from the text? What are you going to do specifically?

Prayer

Group members should have an application-specific item as their first prayer request
Pray for each group member's OneReach person. Please pray for marriages within the church.