

Avoiding the Fear of Persecution

Getting to Know You:

- If you had to choose a type of pain to endure, would you rather face physical, emotional, mental or spiritual pain and why?
- Discuss a painful experience that caused you to grow.

Going Deeper:

- Discuss this quote from Tertullian. "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." Why does the church always grow when it's persecuted?
- Discuss how Jesus personally experiencing pain and intimately knowing your pain can aid you in getting through troubling situations. Use Matt. 26:38-39, Isaiah 53:3-8, Hebrews 4:14-15
- Discuss the different ways Satan and God test us according to Rev. 2:10. Satan tests to destroy. God tests to strengthen.
- Compare the different crowns given to believers. 1 Cor. 9:25, 2 Tim. 4:8, James 1:12, 1 Peter 5:4, Rev. 3:11. What's different about each one. How do we gain these crowns?
- Revelation 2:11 mentions the second death. What is meant by this How might we avoid the second death? Use Rev. 2:11, 20:6-14, 21:8
- What does it mean to be an overcomer/victorious according to these verses? What is given to the overcomer after the admonition to each of the 7 churches in Revelation?

Taking it Home:

- Spend time praying for the persecuted church this week. Pray that they might overcome and endure to the end without denying Christ. Pray for their families. Look up idop.org for family ideas to implement this week.

Avoid Being a Loveless Church

Getting to Know You:

- Are you more of a truth or love person? Explain why.
- What's the 1st thing you notice when you are loveless?

Going Deeper:

- Read Revelation 2:1-7.
- Discuss what the church at Ephesus was doing right and how we might implement some of those things at FBC.
- What caused them to abandon the love they had at first? How might we avoid being a loveless church?
- After each address to the church Jesus says the same thing. Rev. 2:7, 17, 29, 3:6, 13, 22.
 - Why does Jesus say this? What is he calling the church to do? How might we do this in our setting?
- Repentance can be a hard thing to grasp. Look up the following verses and come up with a working definition of repentance. Matt. 3:8, 2 Cor. 7:8-11, Lk. 13:3.
- Discuss how repentance is a one-time thing that leads to a daily thing.

Taking it Home:

- Spend time asking God this week what you need to repent of. Ask him to reveal hidden and unintentional sins.
- Ask God to help you repent to those you've sinned against. Then ask forgiveness from them.