

Problem: prov 9:10

is the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom - smyrna was a wise church
troubled, impoverished, slandered, suffering and on the brink of death smyrna remains the
picture of a successful church - that feared the Lord

Prov 15:16

instead of benefitting from smyrna's example we are pimping the prosperity model of
a trouble free, wealthy, well liked, prospering and powerful church
instead of preparing our people to be both ready and willing to suffer, we are pimping to them
prosperity and damning them to fail

Main Idea:

Our lesson from smyrna: a wise church
is not terrified by trouble
or panicked by poverty
or surprised by slander
It is not scared of suffering
or deterred by death
because it fears God

Implication:

there is something more terrifying than trouble, more panic inducing than poverty, more
surprising than slander, scarier than suffering and more decisive than death - Mk
4:35-41(freud); Lk 12:4-7 (most encouraging book on hell)

application:

do not envy the 'success' of worldly churches - ps 73

Text:**Our lesson from Smyrna: A wise church**

Rev. 2:8 ¶ "And to the angel of the church in **Smyrna** write: 'The words of the **first and the last**, who died
and came to life.

*smyrna - polycarp lit on fire 155 ad - today it is izmir (thriving city in turkey)
the word means bitter and is related to myrrh - a beautiful fragrance from crushing -
(matt 2:11; Jn 19:39; 2 cor 2:14-16)*

*first and last - This title is a quotation from- rev 1:17-18; (Isaiah 41:4; 44:6; and 48:12)
triumphed over death suffering - 1 pet 2:21-24 - our example*

is not terrified by trouble

Rev. 2:9a " 'I know your tribulation

*wisdom - not terrified - Jn 15:18-21; 16:33
- Rom 8:18, 31-39*

or panicked by poverty

Rev. 2:9b and your poverty (but you are rich)

wisdom - not panicked -lk; 9:58; 14:25-33; 6:20

or surprised by slander

Rev. 2:9c and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

*- when polycarp died i- Jews of the city fetched the wood to burn him alive on the sabbath
wisdom - not surprised -1 Pet 4:12-19; matt 5:11-12*

It is not scared of suffering

Rev. 2:10a **Do not fear** (stop being afraid) what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation.

wisdom - not scared - Rom 5:3-5; James 1:2-4; 1 Pet 1:3-7 (Job)

(ten days - Dan 1:12-15 - tested to show they did not need to compromise)

or deterred by death

Rev. 2:10b Be faithful (remain faithful) unto **death**, and I will give you the crown of life.

wisdom - not deterred - crowns - Phil 2:8-9; 1 Cor 9:24-27; Rev 4:4

Because it fears God

Rev. 2:11 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers will not be hurt (2x negative) by **the second death.**'

second death - rev 20:6, 14; 21:8 - those born twice die once - those born once die twice

Implication:

there is something more terrifying than trouble, more panic inducing than poverty, more surprising than slander, scarier than suffering and more decisive than death

- Mk 4:35-41; Luke 12:4-7

Application:

do not envy the success of worldly churches- psalm 73

Articles for further study:

<http://trainingleadersinternational.org/blog/773/encountering-suffering-discovering-my-middle-class-prosperity-gospel>

<https://gotquestions.org/fear-God.html>

<https://gotquestions.org/fear-Lord-beginning-wisdom.html>