

Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life... He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death.

(Eternal Separation from God.
More positively stated Eternal Life.)

Unlike the 23rd Psalm, the promise to the Smyrna Christians from God through John is not about God's presence with them through their persecution, but an invitation to look at their persecution through the lens of eternity.

The 23rd Psalm ends with the similar promise:
“and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

A full biblical teaching encompasses both God's continual presence with us in this life, and our continual presence with God in the life to come.

Do we understand what it was like to be a Smyrna Christian?
Poverty and Persecution.

How would our lives differ if we viewed them through the lens of eternity? (How many zeros are in eternity?)

Psalm 90:12 Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”

(Would we be better able to)
Love God, self, neighbor? Seek first God's kingdom?
Storing up heavenly vs. earthly treasures?
It's love alone that never fails.

FINAL THOUGHTS John 10:22-30 p. 1,667
“*Listening for Jesus' Voice*”

John 10:27-28 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.

Reiteration of the eternal.
My sheep hear my voice. (But how?)
Praying without ceasing/Word/Being Still...

Sermon Notes 05-11-2025

FIRST THOUGHTS Psalm 23 p. 862
“*Presence not Escape*”

Life Lesson: Presence is the most important ministry.

As a seminary student and hospital chaplain Louisville KY, I learned that the most pastoral thing I could do was to show up. Not to solve anything. Not to find perfect words. Just to be there.

The ministry of presence became real for me; in rooms filled with silence, in tears shared without explanation, in sacred moments at the threshold of death. It was in those spaces that Psalm 23 lived: “You are with me.”

In Psalm 23 God does not promise to help us escape from the shadow of the valley of death. Instead, God promises to walk through it with us. To provide for us green pasture and still waters in the midst of our trials and tribulations.

That promise reshapes ministry. It reminds us that showing up matters. That being present, with no agenda, is often the holiest thing we can do. It reminds us that God is not absent in our grief and fear. God is there. Not far off. Not theoretical. But with us.

So when we step into someone's pain, when we sit beside them in their fear, we are not “bringing” God to them, we are bearing witness to the God who is already there.

FURTHER THOUGHTS Revelation 2:8-11 p. 1,914
“*The Lens of Eternity*”

Glasses, Bins, Microscopes, Telescopes
13.8 billion light years or 81 trillion, trillion miles (24 zeros)

The Lens we view things through changes our perception.
Bible; Hermeneutical Lense
The lens of age/experience

Smyrna, a very Roman kind of town (Emperor Worship)
Jewish leaders were anti-Christian; “a synagogue of Satan.”

Christians persecuted and poor.
“you will suffer persecution for ten days” (symbolic)

*Prayerfully, openly engage in relationships
through Christ's love."*

CONTACT INFO

Pastor: Vern Gauthier

(717) 385-9526 - 1stuppastor@gmail.com

Secretary: Elisabeth Gauthier

Office Hours: Monday-Friday 8:30am-11:30am

(717) 776-7525 - 1stupoffice@gmail.com

Clerk of Session: Jim Ellingsworth

(717) 609-3102 – jellingsworth22@gmail.com

Moderator of Deacons: Sally Ann McCrea

(717) 385-4734 samccrea@gmail.com

Church Wi-Fi Password: 1stupwifi

PRAYER LIST

Dorothy Drescher, Donnie McKeehan, Jill Tasker, Sam & Barb Shenk, Patty Geiger, John and Janet Nimmon, Jane Ege, Brian Falk, Don Osborne, Family of Pat Latona, Mike Kulikauskas, Jane Ege, Hope Glesner.

Prayer Persons: Glenn & Elaine Gilbert- 717-243-6611
2378 Walnut Bottom Rd, Carlisle PA 17015

Local Church: Zion- Mike Faust

Presbyterian: Faith Immanuel- No Pastor

There are lots of **sign- up sheets** on the hallway table, take a look and see where you can help out. Thanks!

The 8:30 a.m. Worship Service will be discontinued as of June 1, **with the last service being May 25th.** See the April Oak Leaves for more information.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mother's Day

A blessed Mother's Day to mothers facing the challenges of being a mother in today's world.

A blessed Mother's Day to mothers who grieves the death of a child, either recent or long held.

A Blessed Mother's Day to mothers and their children whose relationship is not what they wished it were.

A blessed Mother's Day to those who miss their mothers and wish they could have just one more day with them.

A Blessed Mother's Day to mothers and their children who will happily enjoy each other's company today.

While Mother's Day is not always "Happy" it can be blessed because of God's redemptive love.

Bike/Hike on the Newville Trail – Sunday, May 18th after the 10:15 service – Start your stroll, hike, bike ride around 11:30 and return to eat at 12:30 - all participants will bring a bagged lunch and the CLC will provide water to drink – meet and eat at the picnic tables. Pastor Vern will lead a Bird Walk for those who are interested.

The newly formed **Men's Breakfast Group** will be meeting on the **first Thursday of each month.** We meet next on **June 5th at 8:00 a.m.** in Rhoades Fellowship Hall.

Oak Leaves: In an effort to save on postage, beginning with the May Oak Leaves, hard page copies will only be mailed via the USPS to our members at home i.e. "Shut-Ins." Hard page copies are available at the church in a basket in the hallway. They will not be addressed (i.e. no names on them), so just pick one up if you want one. Digital Copies will continue to be emailed and also available on our website for reading or download. Questions? see Elisabeth.