**Reading Revelation – Part 4 – Life on an Island – 3 questions to help us navigate life on Patmos**

Revelation 1 - 3

Patmos – is more than the location of the vision, it offers trustworthiness and equal footing with all of John’s fellow believers in Christ. It offers integrity to John’s preaching, so that, when he needs to counsel them, prophesy against their activities, he can. Patmos offers 1) **Empathy** to suffering, 2) **Companionship** to the feeling of loneliness & 3) **Courage** to remain steadfast in loyalty to the reign of Christ. John knows what it is like 1) to be ostracized for beliefs, 2) to suffer at the hands of authority and 3) to never give up on Jesus.

He’s on the island of Patmos because of: 1) The word of God & 2) His Testimony about Christ. Thus, we are given the impression that John is going through what he is, 1) Because he hasn’t given into the world and 2) Hasn’t given up on Christ. The First century world was riddled with incredible temptation to submit to the rule of the Roman empire and conform to the surrounding cultures. The call to holiness and righteousness in scriptures was faced with a great struggle to adapt and conform to the culture.

If we take seriously the call to follow Jesus Christ, the result may very well seem like we are isolated on an island of our own. ***How do we live faithfully in the name of Jesus Christ, where our values, beliefs and convictions run contradictory to a world bent on evil, death and immorality?***

John is exiled to the island of Patmos because he confesses Jesus as his Lord. He doesn’t conform to the wider culture that proclaimed Caesar as Lord and he maintains this witness despite political threat.

John is a companion with the fellow believers in 1) The Suffering in Jesus 2) The Kingdom in Jesus 3) Patient Endurance in Jesus. Despite great loneliness and fear, John is comforted by Christ. “Don’t be afraid, I’m the First and the Last” is a enduring wave of encouragement for all time, for all people who trust in the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Three questions to ask when navigating the island of faithfulness to Jesus Christ. Or, how to maintain a faithful witness:

1. ***Is there a suffering to endure for the sake of my witness and testimony?***
2. ***Is there a kingdom promise to hold onto and find hope in?***

For examples of Kingdom promises, consider the following:

1. There is no one greater than Jesus Christ. He is Lord and Savior, he is victorious over death. If he is the first and the Last, If he is the beginning and the end, then it stands to reasons that Jesus also holds together everything in between the beginning and the end as well!
2. Jesus is among his churches. When he addresses them, the First and the Last, the Beginning and End, he comforts them in the hope and power of his Victory. He comforts the churches. I am in the midst of the church, right there with you.
3. The image of Christ in Revelation 1, should shake us of any notion that Jesus isn’t strong enough to do what he says he is going to do.
4. Jesus is Lord and King. He holds the keys to death and Hades. That is to say, Jesus is the author and perfecter of life.
5. ***Does this situation call for patient endurance for the sake of Christ and his Kingdom?***

If we will faithfully ask these questions, we will begin to do battle with the hypocrisies that compromise our witness.

***If we will seek an answer to these questions, we will find ourselves in ever-increasing hostility with the world, that will be counteracted by an ever-increasing comfort in Jesus Christ.*** We can live a faithful life to Jesus Christ, because we are all companions in this together. We can be faithful, we can endure, we can find strength and hope together in the promises of the kingdom of Christ.