

Persecuted Church

Egyptian Martyrs - picture



World Persecution Map – picture

Persecution is a Biblical Expectation – we need a Persecution Theology. (Degrees)

(2Ti 3:12) ¹²Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

(Jn 15:20) ²⁰“Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.”

(1Pe 4:12) ¹²Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;

Three Necessary Perspectives:

Earthly

(1Co 4:12-13) Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; ¹³being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now.

Heavenly

(Ro 8:35-39) ³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶As it is written: “For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” ³⁷Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. ³⁸For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, ³⁹nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Eternal

(Ro 8:16-18) ¹⁶The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. ¹⁸For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Worth it

(Mt 5:11-12) ¹¹“Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. ¹²“Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

In August, 2015, ISIS crucified and beheaded 11 or 12 indigenous Christian missionaries – after publicly gang-raping the women. The disturbing details of this execution were recently recounted by the missionaries’ director. ISIS took the missionaries captive in early August.

After they all refused to renounce Christ and return to Islam, the missionaries were separated into two groups. At one of the locations, ISIS “summoned a crowd” and then crucified the missionary team leader and his 12 year old son, along with two other young men in their twenties. “All were badly brutalized and then crucified,” the group’s ministry leader said. “They were left on their crosses for two days. No one was allowed to remove them.” According to reports, the ISIS militants posted signs by their Christian victims identifying them as “infidels.” The other group of missionaries, including two women, was taken to a different location.

Staring down certain death, these martyrs also refused to convert to Islam. The two Christian women prayed aloud while being publicly gang-raped, which according to reports, caused their ISIS abusers to “to beat them all the more furiously.” As relayed by the group’s director: Villagers said some were praying in the name of Jesus, others said some were praying the Lord's prayer, and others said some of them lifted their heads to commend their spirits to Jesus. One of the women looked up and seemed to be almost smiling as she said, 'Jesus!'"

The missionaries were beheaded and their bodies hung on crosses.

(1Pe 4:12-14) ¹²Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; ¹³but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. ¹⁴If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.

Sometimes Delivered, Sometimes Martyred, Sometimes Choice – Burmese teachers

(Heb 11:35) Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.

Mission Outweighed Danger

Response: Honor, Rejoice, Pray!

According to Open Doors President and CEO David Curry, the greatest need expressed by the persecuted may surprise most American Christians. "Time and time again, those living under persecution and those who are refugees from it tell us that their greatest need is hope--hope found in their faith and hope born of the knowledge that Christians in the free world are remembering them in prayer," Curry said.

(2Th 3:1-2) ¹Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you, ²and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith.

(Col 4:2-4) ²Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; ³meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, ⁴that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

Still, in the face of the darkest and most vile wickedness, a Christian ministry affiliated with the martyrs tells a story of hope. In Amman, Jordan, a particular Muslim man, whose name is withheld for security reasons, went to a Christian meeting with the intention of killing the aid workers gathered there. Something kept him from following through on his plan, though, and that night he saw Jesus in a dream. The next day he came back and said, “I came to kill you, but last night I saw Jesus, and I want to know what are you teaching—who is this One who held me up from killing you?” He received Christ with tears, and today he's actually helping in the church, helping out other people. We're praying for lots of such Sauls to change to Pauls.

(Mt 5:44) ⁴⁴“But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,

(Ro 12:14) ¹⁴Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

We **must** bless and pray for the persecutors. They are the mission.

Video: Pastor Suta

www.opendoorsUSA.org

www.persecution.com