

Persecution

Christian Life Assembly

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Persecution

- The definition of persecute - to treat (someone) cruelly or unfairly especially because of race, or religious, or political beliefs.

Persecution

- The persecution of Christians is not new at all.
- The likelihood of the American Christians being persecuted is what is new.
- The threat is two pronged – from our own government, and from foreign entities.

Persecution

- With few exceptions, and allowing for scale, we've never really suffered persecution here in the U.S.A.
- Do you think that is about to end?
- If so, why?

Persecution

- 2nd Tim 3:12 Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.
- Have ever felt like we are insulated from the truth of this verse?
- We are not insulated in any way other than by the time in which we live.

Persecution

- **1st Peter 4:12-14** Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.
- “Rejoice”, and “you are blessed” require long term eternity bathed thinking.

Persecution

- 1st John 3:13 Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you.
- We should not be surprised? Why?
- Eph 2:1 Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. 2 You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world.

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- Hebrews 12:3 Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.
- When we consider the great redemptive work Jesus accomplished through suffering, we may be encouraged to think of what can be done through us.

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- **2nd Cor 4:8-12** We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you.
- As it turns out, what appears to the eye is not always what is actually happening.

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- Phil 1:12-14 I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.
- Gen 50:20 You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people.

Persecution

- The hard work of following Christ.
- Rom 12:17-21 Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

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- **1st Peter 4:16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.**
- **John 15:19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.**

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- Rev 20:4 Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. *Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands.* They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

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- **2nd Cor 12:10 For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.**
- **This is a mature Christian mindset – one that realizes that whatever it takes to make me more reliant on Christ is something to be grateful for.**

Persecution

- On January 9, 1985, Pastor Hristo Kulichev, a Congregational pastor in Bulgaria, was arrested and put in prison. His crime was that he preached in his church even though the state had appointed another man the pastor whom the congregation did not elect. His trial was a mockery of justice. And he was sentenced to eight months imprisonment. During his time in prison he made Christ known every way he could. When he got out he wrote, "Both prisoners and jailers asked many questions, and it turned out that we had a more fruitful ministry there than we could have expected in church. God was better served by our presence in prison than if we had been free."

Questions