

The Blessing In The Midst of Persecution

Matthew 5:10-12

10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

1. Persecution Is A Sign Of Your Faith

"In the world, you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." - John 16:33

2. Persecution Increases Your Longing for Heaven

"We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at sea. We are far too easily pleased."

- C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*

3. Persecution Deepens Your Faith In Christ

"Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness." - James 1:2-3

4. Our Response?

a. Pray and Support the Persecuted Church

"Approximately 215 million Christians face significant levels of persecution in the world today according to Open Doors. Researchers for the organization estimate 1 in 12 Christians live where their faith is 'illegal, forbidden or punished'."

Every month...

255 Christians are killed

104 Christians are abducted

180 Christian women are assaulted

66 churches are attacked

160 Christians are detained without trial and imprisoned

www.opendoorsusa.org

b. Ask "What would I be willing to suffer for the cause of Christ?"

c. Realize that More Persecution Is Likely Coming In Our Context

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."