

Lesson Notes:

Persecution: The Cost of Commitment

Jesus told his disciples that they would be persecuted for their faith. We may also experience persecution as followers of Christ. While the persecution we face may not be as extreme as the disciples and early followers of Christ faced we can be certain that as followers of Christ we can expect to experience prejudice and persecution.

Scriptural Principles

- 1) **Jesus said we would be “hated” and “persecuted” – John 15:18-25** We see this in Middle Eastern countries as Christians are forced to renounce Jesus or die. Iraq, Iran, Somalia and Sudan are examples.
- 2) **We are called to be people of grace and truth, not obnoxious. – John 1:14** – We must present the gospel in a way that it is not objectionable to others. One excellent way is to live out our faith and be holy and acceptable. Others will see and contentment we have and will wish to have that same internal peace.
- 3) **Paul describes our life in terms of tribulation, stress and turmoil. – 2 Corinthians 6:4-5.**
- 4) **But Paul also said we would receive a peace that money cannot buy – 2 Corinthians 6:6-10.**
- 5) **Jesus told us that if we lose our lives for him we have found everlasting life. – Matthew 16:24-25** – Many believe that those that are martyred for their faith will enjoy a special reward in heaven. The Church leader Polycarp actually sought martyrdom.
- 5) **We must have courage in the face of persecution – Acts 8:1-8** – Philip showed great courage after Stephen’s death and Saul’s rampage. Regardless of what had happened to Stephen Philip went to Samaria preaching the holy gospel.
- 7) **James encourages us to rejoice in our trials – James 1:2-4.**
- 8) **Peter tells us that by going through “fiery trials” we can experience Christ’s glory. – 1 Peter 4:12 -14**