

TOPIC:

PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH

Bible Text: 2 Timothy 3:12

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Prayers

Thank you father for another opportunity to learn and receive from you this evening! Open our hearts and remove every distraction. In Jesus Name I have prayed!

Study

Brethren in the Lord, tonight we would be considering matters related to our walk with Christ as related to the time we are presently and the period we are heading towards. It would be out of place to claim ignorance of what the world is going through currently, last time, we learnt about endurance during these last days. So tonight, we want to go into another scope of these happenings even as it was in the early Church.

2 Timothy 3:12 KJV

Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

What is Persecution?

It is the condition of being persecuted, harassed, or annoyed for the sake of Christ. It is the act of being frustrated for associating oneself with Christ. It is the attitude of facing

suffering, attacks, and being hated for proclaiming Christ boldly. Persecution, is not a new word to christians who really understand the basis of their faith. However, we have two kinds of persecutions, which are;

Godly persecutions

Ungodly persecutions

Godly Persecution

This is the one that concerns us the most as christians, looking at our text 2 Timothy 3:12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. Believers have to know that their persecutions have alot to do with their godliness, the more you live godly the more you are persecuted. If as a christian we have never suffered persecution, it means that we have not been living the right kind of life which Christ Jesus commanded. The reason for this is that the life of a genuine child of God is in total opposition to the ways of the world. And because of this, believers have constant disagreements with the unfruitful works of darkness. The bible says in 2 Corinthians 6:14 that Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? because of this, saints are hated, and would be tried and tested.

Let's realize that if we must make heaven, suffering for Christ is inevitable, it must surely come, there are different ways these would happen. But the Lord is waiting to see those who would be faithful to Him, even to the end of time. In fact the day you make a resolution to start living a life of total devotions to God is the day the devil would send those who would persecute you to you. It's just like when entourages are being attached to a newly elected president, they have to follow him wherever he goes, no matter what, just to protect him, but for this case here, it is the opposite, he wants to make sure we end up with him in destruction. Therefore, the earlier we recognize this fact, the better it is for us. We should not count suffering for Christ as lost, no, there is no one who endures for Christ's sake that will not be rewarded, you will certainly be made to suffer because of your religious stand. Prepare for it. See what Peter said in 1 Peter 4:13 that " But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

To a man who is not walking in the Spirit, rejoicing in suffering is foolishness, but as for us, we have chosen to believe and get associated with Christ's sufferings so that we would get glorified at last for us to gain eternal joy.

Why do we have to face persecutions

1. **We are not of this world:** Until we come to the knowledge of the truth that our

citizenship is not of this world, we would always be pained when persecuted. This is just like when a colored man finds himself in a racist community, what does he expect to happen to him? Should he be surprised of why he is being treated like a can of trash? No, he should have expected that. John 17:14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Christians do not have the same (spiritual) blood with the world, we are heirs of the kingdom, the world does not recognize us, so they will never be pleased with us for our family background is from above not like theirs which is from beneath. Don't expect people to be nice and treat you good because you are nice and treating them good and also living a godly life. It's just like you expecting a lion not to eat you because you don't eat lions.

2. **The world hates Christ:** the world hates Christ so much. John 15:25 But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause. they hated Christ without any reason. But for us who follow Christ, we have to learn to live amidst those who hate us and still love them, but never should we join them in their wickedness. They persecute us because darkness hates light. John 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. The scriptures makes us to understand that we are the light of the world, and since anything done in the secret will be made clear by light, the world must therefore hate us because we would always expose its evil deeds/works, that is why as a child of God if darkness still reigns wherever you are, your salvation is questionable.

If the world hated Christ, then be rest assured that you as Christ's like, you will certainly face the same thing.

John 15:18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.

But in all these Romans 8:35 says Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? what should believers allow to separate them from Christ? It's time for us to wake up to every rising challenges as regard to our faith, and not be soon shaken by the wiles of the devil. Persecution come in different ways, because of our time, we would not be able to go into that. But we have to be aware that, any suffering we pass through for Christ will be rewarded, and because we seek for a reward which is eternal and incorruptible, we therefore strive to endure.

Very soon there would be a turn around in the world, which would call for world wide persecution of the saints, we must learn to stand firm we must learn not to deny Christ in anyway, the truth is that it's not easy that's why we must rise up to the defense of our faith at any point in time. What if we are being tortured, beaten, stabbed, stoned, molested, and broken, what would be our resolutions? All these things can only be done to our physical bodies not our souls, the scriptures says in Luke 12:4 And I say unto you

my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. let's make up our minds that even though our physical bodies are being killed we would not lose our spiritual one (soul) because Matthew 16:25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

May we all find our lives in Christ.

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