

Hebrews 11:35b-40

Of Whom the World Was Not Worthy

What they had was worth dying for ...

I. Suffering Servants & Martyrs

A. Yesterday

B. Today

C. Tomorrow

II. Sharing in Christ's Sufferings

A. Jesus

B. His Witnesses

C. And You

... what we have is even better.

Children, Listen ...

1. Does Jesus ever say that following Him will be easy?
2. Where do Christians find strength when suffering persecution?
3. What is a Christian Martyr?
4. Will you pray with your family for people around the world who suffer for belonging to Jesus today?

No Surprise

The fact of the matter is that persecution and martyrdom are as old as sin. It began with Cain murdering his brother. Ungodly spite has clashed with godly character ever since then. The Old Covenant is filled with accounts of saints suffering at the hands of enemies of God and his people, some facing horrible torture, others facing death. Jesus had warned his followers that the same would be true for them. The Hebrew saints faced the reality of the threat every day. The author encourages them to reflect on the way their predecessors endured through faith. Their endurance was meant to inspire them to press on no matter what came to pass from enemies of Christ and His Kingdom. They looked forward to Jesus and a better life to come. Not all believers face the same levels of persecution, but some is bound to come to all followers of Jesus. The Apostle Paul (who had been on both ends of the stick) wrote: Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived (2 Timothy 3:12). American Christians can be grateful for the fact that we, in general, face very little abuse due to our faith. Let us never take that for granted. And let's remember to pray for our brothers and sisters around the world who suffer daily for the sake of Christ.