

## Message to a Persecuted People

*Revelation*

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**Bible Text:** Revelation 2:8-11  
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I have to admit that the sermon this week was a lot more difficult to prepare than I thought it would be. In fact, I got an early start on it even last week and I understood the meaning of it by Tuesday, but I wasn't comfortable with how I was going to introduce it to you or share it with you until later in the week, that there's no great theological dilemma in our text, there's no new meaning, the trouble wasn't with the content of the message itself even, the trouble was with the preacher who was gonna be preaching it and the congregation that was going to be listening to it, you and me. You see, the letter to the church in Smyrna is a message to persecuted people and we Americans suffer from two major misconceptions about persecution. These misconceptions, I believe, hinder our ability to learn and apply what Jesus is teaching us through John in this message to the church at Smyrna. By God's grace, we will overcome these misconceptions in the course of the message this morning.

Would you stand with me as we read, as I read for you Revelation 2:8-11?

8 "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life, says this: 9 'I know your tribulation [your affliction, your persecution] and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy [or slander] by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. 10 'Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. 11 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.'

And may God grant us the ability to understand his word this morning.

You may be seated.

No fancy introductions today. Let's just get right into the text and point 1 in your study guides, the first misconception we have about persecution is that we don't understand what persecution is. This message that I just read that Jesus gave to the angel or the pastor of the church in Smyrna to be read to their congregation, is not a message for the

church in China, it is not a message for Christians in a Muslim country, this isn't just for Christians who are beaten, tortured and thrown in jail, perhaps killed, this is a message for the church in America. Now you might be embarrassed to consider ourselves persecuted, rich as we are in America, but we don't see ourselves as persecuted because we think that persecution is that which must greatly affect the Christian, whereas the Bible tells us that persecution is what most hinders the spread of the Gospel message. John tells us of the persecution against the Smyrnan church in Revelation 2:10 where Jesus says, or actually in verse 9 where Jesus says, "I know your tribulation," and that word for "tribulation" is just a general word. It means affliction, it means persecution, and in this context it's meant to be a broad category that is further defined as we go on. He says, "I know your tribulation, your poverty and the blasphemy." The poverty and the blasphemy are the kinds of persecution they're facing.

Letter A in your notes. I suppose as far as afflictions go, poverty isn't so bad. I can think of a lot of worse things to face. I suppose if I had a choice between poverty and death, I would find poverty a little bit more appealing, but poverty for the church in Smyrna was especially difficult. It's one thing to be poor among other poor people, but Smyrna was the wealthiest city in Asia Minor, an extravagantly wealthy city. It's always been a wealthy city. Smyrna is still around today. It is still a wealthy city.

In ancient times, much of the wealth came from the production, the growing of the tree that produced myrrh. In fact, the name Smyrna means myrrh. The city lies at the end of a valley between hills and mountains on both sides on the shore of the sea, and all of the wealth of the valley, all the myrrh harvested there traveled down that valley and out the port to other parts of the Mediterranean and coming in from all parts of the Mediterranean were other goods that increased the wealth of the city.

The wealth was used to build stately buildings that sat atop a hill and overlooked what was a well-planned city. Some cities like I think Santa Fe is one of them, they just kind of show up. You know, people just start gathering together and some of the largest cities in the world like Mexico City, people just start going there and they start putting up shacks and shanties on the outskirts of town. That's not Smyrna. Smyrna had some pretty wise builders and all the streets were paved and these buildings looked over this well-planned city. One street was called the Golden Way. It wound from the east to the west through the city, past magnificent temples to Zeus, Apollo, Sybil, others. Smyrna was considered the most beautiful city in the region, called in its day the crown of Asia Minor, and today it's called the pearl of the Aegean Sea.

Everyone benefited from the wealth of Smyrna except for the Christians. Now you might think it wouldn't be so bad to be a poor person in a wealthy society, after all, the poverty line must rise the wealthier the people around you get, but actually no. There are actually two Greek words for poor. There is a Greek word for poor that means you barely have enough; you're just scraping by; and there's another word for poor which means you don't have anything at all and the Christians were poor of the second variety. They didn't have anything at all and it wasn't because they were lazy, I think it was probably because of the second aspect of their persecution in verse 9. The first way they were persecuted was

through poverty, the second way was through slander. The word is literally blasphemy which most of the time means saying bad things about God, but in this context, it most likely I think we can take it to mean slander, things that people say against other people. I think that's how the English Standard Version has it.

The Christians were being slandered by the Jews who were connected to the local Jewish synagogue. No doubt many of the Christians in the church had once, being Jews themselves, their heritage, had once been a part of the synagogue. That's normally how it worked as Paul went around winning people to Christ. He would start in the synagogue, people would come to Christ, they would get kicked out of the synagogue and they would have to go start a church elsewhere. When the Gospel came to Smyrna, it caused a division in that synagogue and the Christians there were forced out, shunned by the other members of the synagogue who many of which were probably their family, had definitely been their friends, and then began their slander.

What did these Jewish people, these family members, these former friends say? Well, we don't know exactly but I don't think it's a coincidence that Jesus mentions both poverty and slander in the same verse. In such a wealthy city, all it took was for someone to come along and say, "You don't wanna do business with those Christians." Really? Why? What's wrong with the Christians? "They're strange. Let me tell you about all the different things they do. You wanna do business with people like me." That's all it took and before you know it, people started listening to the gossip and the slander and your reputation grew, a bad reputation all through the valley, and it wasn't long before customers went elsewhere and resources dried up.

This is where we need to pause and define what persecution is because most of us probably think of persecution as people losing their homes, thrown into prison, churches burned, Christians martyred, and that's definitely a part of persecution but did you realize that the most mentioned method of persecution in the Bible is slander? Turn in your Bibles with me, if you would, to Matthew 5. We find there the Beatitudes, the nine blessings that Jesus pronounces on those who would come after him. I want to look at the last blessing. We find it in verses 10 through 12. It says there, "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of God." Jesus is offering his blessing for those who are persecuted for preaching the Gospel, for following him, for being righteous. Then he gets more specific and he says in verse 11, "Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me." Notice in this very touching and powerful passage meant to comfort those who are persecuted, he doesn't say, "Blessed are you when you are killed. Blessed are you when they steal all your stuff." Now I'm sure that's part of the blessing, that's not devoid of the context there, the meaning, but what he says first and foremost is what people say. Verse 12, he says, "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way," using slander, talking against the prophets, "they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

There are two entire books of the Bible, 1 & 2 Corinthians, where Paul writes to try to straighten people out in regard to the slander that was leveled against him by people who

came and said that the Gospel of Jesus wasn't enough, you also needed to follow Jewish rituals. Not only is slander the most common method, it's also the most insidious, the most harmful and the most costly, and as you're listening to me, you might not be convinced yet because in your mind you're thinking, "Boy, I don't know. I think death is a lot worse than slander and sticks and stones may break my bones and all that, right?" Well, it depends on your point of view.

I have in your notes there, I believe, two definitions for Christian persecution and I don't mind calling the first one the wrong view. It says depriving Christians of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness because they are Christians, and let's be honest, isn't that normally the way we think of persecution? What's happening to the Christians themselves? And yet the reason slander is the most harmful method of persecution is because the second definition is actually the biblical definition: measures taken against Christians to prevent the spread of the Gospel. How bad persecution is is not measure by what is done to the Christian but what is done to hinder the Gospel message, and which does more to stymie the Gospel message, death or slander? If a person is martyred, most people wonder, "Well, what did he know or have that was worth dying for?" Wherever Christians die, the church flourishes, but if a Christian is allowed to live and you go around telling everybody he's an untrustworthy scoundrel, even if not everybody believes it, there's a doubt in their mind and the Gospel is rejected. In both instances, the church is purified because nobody wants to die and nobody really wants to face slander, but slander is the worse of the two because it muddies the waters of evangelism. It leaves people with a bad taste in their mouth when they hear about Jesus. One of our misconceptions is that we need, a misunderstanding of what persecution is and so for us to really get the most out of Revelation 2 where I find myself, once again, we have to understand what persecution truly is.

There is a third part of their persecution there in Smyrna in verse 10, "Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison," and yes, sometimes persecution does mean prison and I don't know that it's that far off for us in America. We don't know why they were thrown in prison, maybe it was because of the slander. Whatever the reason, they were only there for 10 days before they got things straightened out with the authorities, but they went to prison. We often think of persecution as happening to somebody else but let me ask you, have you ever been shunned by your family because you left the family church to follow Jesus Christ? You left the old religion to follow the true path of salvation?

One of our dear friends in Newman Grove was going to the university in Lincoln. She met her future husband there. But she was not a believer. She went to a different church that didn't preach the Gospel. Her boyfriend, soon to be husband, went to an evangelical church, had grown up in a Bible church, and as they got to know each other, the differences between their faiths came to light and eventually this person, this girl, became a follower of Jesus Christ. Her family was none too pleased and as time for the wedding approached, the family threatened her, "We will not come to your wedding unless you come back to the church." And she had a decision to make. Her family met and had a party before her wedding without her. That hurts. What should she do? By God's grace,

the family relented and they did come to the wedding but until that happened, there's a question in your mind: is this faith worth it if I'm going to lose my family?

Do you ever show up at family reunions desperately desiring to share Christ but knowing it's not going to be received well? Wondering if you should? Your consternation and angst comes because of persecution. Have you ever been mocked because of your beliefs, your worldview, the fact that you carry a Bible? If so, that is persecution because Satan is using that to try to get you to be less vocal about the message. And about our dear Vice President, they consider him a radical because he's outspoken about his Christian beliefs. "He needs to tone it down a little bit," they say.

I know this is persecution because the measure of persecution is that which stymies the spread of the Gospel and we have become reluctant to share the Gospel because of what other people will do or say about it, and one of the battlegrounds for the Gospel today is in our public schools where the worldview of atheism and pluralism presses on and all of our kids are being infected with it and I've talked to teachers in the public school and it bothers them and they don't know, "What should we do? What shouldn't we do? What's the most effective way to be a Christian?"

I was sitting with one teacher and I'm not saying to make the teacher feel bad, not that they'll be listening, but this teacher was bemoaning the worldliness in the public school and I asked, "Well, how do you find ways to share the Gospel with your students?" And they said, "I don't share the Gospel with my students. I would lose my job." And I said, "Okay, and?" "Well, if I lose my job, I won't be around to influence the students." And I said, "It doesn't sound like the Gospel is being shared with them anyway, so where's the Gospel influence?"

And it isn't just teachers and I don't mean to pick on them, but do we share Christ at work? Why not? Do we share Christ with our neighbors? Why not? I'm not saying that we have to be foolish or we have to be Bible-thumpers. We can introduce Jesus carefully, tastefully, at a moment when somebody's in pain and the name of Jesus is the only thing that can help them. But any part of our reluctance to share comes from what other people might say about us, what other people might do to us, or what other people might think about us, that's persecution. The point is persecution is that which tempts Christians to stop sharing the Gospel.

The second misconception we find throughout the entire message to Smyrna, it's what we're supposed to say to people who are persecuted. Sometimes we treat people who are being persecuted as though something odd were happening to them. We treat them like they're sick or dying. We speak of them as pitiable creatures in need of our sympathy, but that is not the way that Jesus spoke to this church in Revelation 2, is it? Jesus begins his message to them by, first of all, telling them who he is. The first thing you say to somebody who is being persecuted is, the first thing you talk to them about is the character of Jesus.

Look at verse 8, Jesus says, "I am the first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life." He's the first and the last. Now what does that mean? This name for Jesus is used three times in the book: once in the first chapter; once in the last chapter; and then right here. Other than that, the only place I was able to find it in the Bible was in the book of Isaiah. So I have the verses there for you. Let's just go there for a few minutes and just kind of see if we can gain any understanding of the title from those places.

First of all, Isaiah 41:4. He's talking about the different things that are happening in the world and in verse 4 the Lord speaks and says, "Who has performed and accomplished it, Calling forth the generations from the beginning? 'I, the LORD, am the first, and with the last. I am He.'" In chapter 44, verse 6, "the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts says: 'I am the first and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me.'" And later on in verse 8, "Don't tremble and be afraid." Chapter 48, verses 12 and 13, "Listen to Me, O Jacob, even Israel whom I called; I am He, I am the first, I am also the last. Surely My hand founded the earth, And My right hand spread out the heavens; When I call to them, they stand together."

Isaiah 40 through 48 is well-known to describe and defend the sovereignty of God. These verses speak to his control over creation. He was there at the beginning, before the beginning, he'll be there at the end, and everything from the beginning to the end is in his view and not only in his view, but in his control. Chapter 46, verse 9 says, "Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure.'" God is looking at the history of man and he's saying, "I was there at the beginning. I'm there at the end. I'm all through the middle. And history is going in such a way that it will accomplish the purpose that I have for it even the persecution that you face." God governs all the events of creation, even the actions of sinful men. Sinful men cannot do anything that God won't allow, and if I know that God is for me in his providence, he has a purpose for me in my persecution, I can face anything.

The Jews in Revelation 2, were the ones who were uttering the slander. Satan was the character who motivated them from the text, but behind it all is the first and the last and nothing gets by him. Nothing can separate us from him. If he's for us, who can be against us? We shouldn't shun persecution. We shouldn't feel bad for people who are persecuted. We shouldn't feel sorry for ourselves when we face persecution. Persecution, Christian, is when we shine. Persecution tells us that we must be doing something right to get Satan all riled up like that. When life is falling apart around us, when people have pushed us into a corner by their slander and their violence, we remain steady, we have joy, we have a peace that passes all understanding because Jesus is the first and the last, and even though there are fearful things, probably the biggest in our minds being death, the next thing you say to somebody who is being persecuted is that this Jesus is the one who was dead and has come to life. Literally Jesus says, "I was the corpse who is now living." We stand firm because the worst thing they can do is kill us and once they kill us, they're falling right into our hands because we have something much better waiting than this life

in the life to come. 1 Corinthians 15:54-57 says, "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?...thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Jesus said, "Don't fear those who kill the body, fear him who can destroy both your body and your soul in hell."

So my point is the first thing you say to a persecuted Christian is that God is in control and that Jesus conquered death. The second thing you say to them, letter B, is to encourage them to stay the course. Verse 10. We see two commands there: do not fear is the negative command; and towards the end of the verse, be faithful. Normally in the other letters to the churches, this is where Jesus tells them, "Good job. Atta boy, for all the things you're doing well." Then he tells them, "You'd better brush up on this because I don't like what I see going on over here." But for the church in Smyrna, there's none of that. He doesn't tell them good job for doing anything. He doesn't tell them you'd better brush up on this about anything, and it wasn't that they were the perfect Christians, it's that when you're talking to a persecuted people, that's probably not the time to give them a report card.

That's a time to encourage them and we see the first encouragement just in the word starting in verse 9, "I know. I know your tribulation." Jesus sees it, not only that, he's been through it and worse. He knows our persecution and he does offer a bit of encouragement by way of parenthesis where he says, "I know your poverty, but you're rich. You're rich. Don't worry about that." But the main part of the message is a challenge. There's no pity. There's no commiseration. There's only a challenge for them to continue in their faith.

The first challenge, the first command is be fearless. This is the most repeated command in the Bible: be strong and courageous. When Paul asked the Ephesians to pray for him, he said, "Pray that I would speak boldly." Now fear is the natural reaction to persecution so I'm not talking about that natural reaction, somebody says something about you and you have this sinking feeling in your stomach and you're like, "Oh my goodness, what's wrong? What's going on?" But once we get past that initial reaction of fear which is natural in a sinful world, being frail as we are, once we're past that, we draw from Jesus the courage, a fearlessness that will help us stand against our strongest enemy because God is stronger than our strongest enemy. Psalm 27:1 says, "The LORD is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the defense of my life; Whom shall I dread?" Be fearless. That's the message.

The second message is be faithful. Literally it says, "Keep on being faithful. You've been faithful, keep up the good work. Don't give up now." How long are you supposed to keep that going? Until death. The point is the second thing you tell a persecuted Christian is to be fearless and faithful.

Friends, Christianity is not a way we cope with this life until we get a better life. Christianity is not a social club. Christianity is not a political party. Christianity is a war for the souls of men and women. How do you talk to a soldier? You don't say, "Oh, were those bad men shooting at you today? I'm so sorry. I hope you don't get shot at tomorrow.

That would be terrible. Maybe you need a break. Come to momma." Is that the way you talk to a soldier? That's gonna get somebody killed. We're soldiers.

Persecution is not an aberration, it is the normal way of life for the Christian who is doing his job. What people say to you or about you or do to you is what happens when you tell sinners they need to repent, which is why as Chuck read from 2 Timothy 3:12, "All who desire to be godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." We don't tell people how sad we are they're being persecuted, we tell them, "We're in the fight with you. We will be fearless. We will be faithful to the end."

The third thing we tell them is reach for the reward. The end of verse 10 we read, "I will give you the crown of life. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death." One of the greatest encouragements to someone going through basic military training is the letters they receive from home. We know this firsthand because we've just had two boys go through basic military training and we sent them more letters than I probably ever sent to my children in their lives, and I'm a fairly steady writer. They gave the parents instructions about what not to write and what to write to your children in basic military training. They said, "Don't tell them that you miss them, tell them, push on to the end. Keep the graduation in sight."

The fearless and faithful Christian fights on for a reward. We see the same reward mentioned twice from two different perspectives. The first one is the crown of life and this isn't a literal crown, life is the crown. If you're fearless and faithful, you will receive a crown which is life. And the second reward is you will not suffer the second death. It's the strongest negative in the Greek language. It means never under any circumstance will you suffer the second death if, what? If you overcome.

The Christian life calls for diligent perseverance. The way we know on this earth who is truly a Christian after all, is the one we observe being faithful, persevering fearlessly to the end. People like that have no fear of death and the point is Jesus commands his people to be fearless and faithful when persecuted because the life to be gained is greater than this earthly life.

Well, in conclusion, I want to direct you to one other part of the text here that we need to develop and that is the pitfalls for those who are persecuted. You might be asking where in that text do I see pitfalls? Well, why is the persecution coming to them according to verse 10? Right in the middle there, do you see it? "So that you will be tested." Who's doing the testing? "Behold, the devil." This word for "test" is the same word used elsewhere for "temptation." They are interchangeable. It's the same Greek word. The English translation could either be tempting or testing depending on the one who's doing it, and actually I think because of that, this translation should be better rendered, "So that you will be tempted," because the devil never tests us, he always tempts us. The difference is you test somebody because even though it's gonna be challenging, you hope that they succeed. You tempt someone so that when it's challenging you can sit back and laugh at them when they fall on their face, and I can tell you for sure that the devil is not



encouraging us on in Christ Jesus, he wants us to fall flat on our face and so he brings us the temptation of persecution, the temptation to stop sharing the Gospel.

So we need to beware of the pitfalls. What are the pitfalls? What does failure look like when you're persecuted? Well, a couple of things. It looks like giving up. Paul had a companion, a fellow worker named Demas. He was with Paul when he was imprisoned in Rome, but somewhere along the way he said, "Enough is enough. I can't go around like this," not having a lot to eat, always being talked about, maybe even being physically abused, and Paul says in 2 Timothy 4:10 that he was in love with this present world.

He talks of these same type of people in Philippians 3, verses 18 through 20 where he says, "For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, whose minds are set on earthly things, but our citizenship is in heaven."

There are times when it's not gonna seem worth it. The constant being at odds with the world, the resisting of sin, the constant mockery of everything that we hold dear, being told that we're stupid because we believe in a God who creates and the sanctity of life, Jesus said, "Whatever you give up here will be returned to you with interest both now and in the life to come." You will never give up more for following Jesus than God will replace.

The second way I think we can fail at persecution is running away. Some places of serving are harder than others. Don't abandon your post because you think it's easier somewhere else. It isn't.

I think a third way is by fighting back. Jesus was very clear that we turn the other cheek. We actually lose more by fighting back than we gain. We might get people to ease off the pressure, we might get our due, we might get our rights, but what happened to the Gospel? We're not fighting for our rights, we're fighting for the souls of men and women bound for hell which is why Paul in 1 Corinthians 4 says, "When reviled, we bless. When persecuted, we endure. When slandered, we entreat."

Friends, persecution is everywhere for the Christian, the only question is for you to ask yourself: is the persecution that I face working? Is it keeping me from doing my job from spreading the Gospel? From speaking up about Jesus when I know I should?

So in application, that's why Jesus says trust in the providential God. Be fearless. Be faithful and reach for the reward that we have in Christ Jesus.

Let's pray.

*Father, our natural reaction to persecution is to turn and run the other way because we're frail and I wonder, Lord, if the reason the church in America is as weak and frail as it is, is because we're failing at persecution and how we should be acting when are persecuted. So Lord, help us to be fearless and help us to be faithful. Father, would You*

*so change our hearts and minds that we view the life to be gained as more precious than any life we can have down here? I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

## **MESSAGE TO A PERSECUTED PEOPLE**

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Revelation 2:8-11

From: Scott Carlson

February 3, 2019

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### **INTRODUCTION: TWO MISCONCEPTIONS**

#### **I. WHAT PERSECUTION IS. V. 8**

##### A. POVERTY

##### B. SLANDER

Matthew 5:10-12

#### **Wrong View Of Christian Persecution**

Depriving Christians of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness because they are Christians.

#### **Christian Persecution**

Measures taken against Christians to prevent the spread of the Gospel.

##### C. PRISON

? Have you ever been shunned by your family because you were born again and they were not?

? Do you show up at family reunions desperately desiring to share Christ, but knowing it won't be received well, wondering if you should?

? Have you ever been mocked because of your beliefs, your world-view, the fact that you carry a Bible?

? Do you share Christ at work? Why not? Do you share Christ with neighbors? Why not?

**Point:** Persecution is that which tempts Christians to stop sharing the Gospel.

## II. WHAT YOU SAY TO A PERSECUTED CHRISTIAN. V. 8

### A. TELL THEM WHO JESUS IS. V. 8

#### 1. The First And The Last, v. 9

? What does that mean?

Isaiah 41:4; 44:6; 48:12, 13

Isaiah 46:9, 10

#### 2. The Former Corpse Now Living, v. 9

##### **1 Corinthians 15:54b-57**

“Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”...thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Point:** The first thing you say to a persecuted Christian is that God is in control and Jesus conquered death.

### B. ENCOURAGE THEM TO STAY THE COURSE. V. 10

#### 1. Be Fearless

##### **Psalm 27:1b**

The LORD is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the defense of my life; Whom shall I dread?

#### 2. Be Faithful

? How long?

Hebrews 10:32-39

**Point:** The second thing you tell a persecuted Christian is to be fearless and faithful.

2 Timothy 3:12

### C. REACH FOR THE REWARD. VV. 10, 11

#### 1. You Will Receive The Crown Of Life.

## 2. You Will Not Suffer The Second Death.

**Point:** Jesus commands His people to be fearless and faithful when persecuted because the life to be gained is greater than this earthly life.

### **CONCLUSION:** PITFALLS FOR THE PERSECUTED

? Where do I see “pitfalls” in the text?

James 1:13, 14

? What does failure look like for the persecuted Christian?

1. Giving up.

2 Timothy 4:10; Philippians 3:18-20

2. Running Away

3. Fighting back.

#### **1 Corinthians 4:12b-13a**

When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we entreat.

### **APPLICATION:**

1. Trust in a Providential God who conquered death.

2. Be Fearless.

3. Be Faithful.

4. Reach For the Reward.