

Providence Reformed Baptist Church  
Marble Falls, Texas

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Special Message: Aliens in Exile – 1 Peter 2:11-17

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In light of the ruling this week from the Supreme Court of the United States of America with regard to the redefining of marriage we have seen all sorts of responses and reactions from the world and the church, ranging from celebration to condemnation and hope to hysteria. We have been reminded that there are those faithful preachers and pastors who have been proclaiming for years, even generations, that God was judging our nation, for to whom much is given, much will be required (Luke 12:48). And while we can affirm the presence of Christian beliefs in the lives and motivations of some of our Founding Fathers, we must confess that this country that we love has never actually been a “Christian nation.” A Christian nation does not oppress the poor and keep them in servitude with entitlements that are taken by force from others. A Christian nation does not war with other nations 222 out of 239 years it has existed. A Christian nation does not murder 4000 of its unborn citizens every day at the altar of sexual freedom and personal convenience. A Christian nation is not ruled by wicked godless politicians or judged by courts that reject the only foundation for justice in the world found in the Word of God. A Christian nation does not call evil good and good evil.

What transpired this week in the halls of government has not signaled a change of any kind. These events have not brought God’s judgment upon us. No, these things make it plain that we are already under the judgment of God and have been for some time. In fact, as John MacArthur has stated, these things prove to those who have eyes to see and ears to hear that God has turned our nation over to its sin and depravity. The ruling this week did not invite God’s wrath, it is the fruit born out of God’s wrath. We as a nation have been handed over.

These things will serve to winnow the church and fan the fires of revival! True Christians and false will both be exposed for all to see. The church will suffer persecution as the culture and our country use every available means, legal or otherwise, to silence our gospel witness and our preaching. Marriage after all was ordained by God and serves as a presentation of the very gospel the world hates. No wonder they seek to undermine marriage. But the darkness will never overcome the light.

Now, is it really as bad as all that? Yes, and worse. The nation that we have known and loved, our constitutional republic, has died from within. The remains will continue to decay. So what should we do? Revolution? Constitutional Convention? Should we flee?

Where do we go? Should we fight? The weapons of our warfare are not carnal. Should we give up or give in, shut up and sit down? What are we to do?

As we have been studying in the Book of Philippians, persecution and suffering is nothing new for the church. The fact that we have been as free as we have for as long as we have should shame us as we see how little we have accomplished with that freedom. And for those who have prayed that we might be like the New Testament Church, well, we have entered a time where we are living in a culture just like the first century church...maybe we should have been more careful about what we were asking for!

As we have studied Paul's letter encouraging the church at Philippi I wanted to take the time this morning, after this monumentally historical moment in the demise of our nation, to go to the Word of God for the answer to this question: "What do we do now?" Let us look at the first letter written by Peter to the suffering saints in Asia Minor as they encountered and endured persecution under the Roman government. Let us look then this morning to God's Word given to us in 1 Peter 2:11-17.

Peter began the letter by reminding these dispersed pilgrims how established they are in their salvation through Jesus Christ, elect and sanctified, being able to stand firm even under pressure and persecution by walking in holiness through obedience to the purifying Word of God. By the time we get this far into chapter 2 he is not telling us why to be holy, but how to be holy and how to endure life in a hostile and corrupt culture. He starts by telling us how to relate to the government!

He begins with a reminder that we must not take on the standards of conduct that the culture around us holds. We should bring the standards from "home," where our citizenship is, in heaven! We are to import our values to the place where we live from where our life is hidden with Christ in God in the heavenlies. We must strive and fight against absorbing the cultural context around us – "do not be conformed to this world...", "do not love the world or the things in the world...", familiarity and friendship with the world makes us an enemy of God, remember? (Rom. 12:1-2; 1 John 2:15-17; James 4:1-4).

Instead we confront the culture and the world with the truth of the Gospel. It is not a contentious confrontation; it is a compassionate confrontation as we live to be salt and light in a tasteless, dark, and dying world. The Gospel, to the world, is offensive. The world will be offended when we talk and look and live like Jesus. So be it. They hate Him and they will hate us, but may they never have a reason to think we hate them.

We must live like what we are, citizens of heaven who don't belong here. And in these verses he gives us four things we must do to live as submissive citizens of heaven. Here is our text: READ 1 PETER 2:11-17

The first thing he tells us here is that we are to live like what we are, sojourners and pilgrims. This is our identity as disciples of Jesus Christ. This world is not our home. We don't belong here. In fact, an even better translation for the word sojourner would be the word alien. When it comes to living in this world we are to view ourselves as aliens. We are aliens in a foreign land. That is why geographical, regional, and ethnic differences cannot divide the Body of Christ. The Church is made up of people from every tribe and tongue, every nation and people, from all around the world, and while our cultures may be different from the nations of this earth we share a culture of holiness as members of the Family of God. The standards for holiness don't change from culture to culture. We strive to be holy wherever we are because He is holy and has saved us so that we might be holy and without blame. Jesus is our standard and we are to imitate Him.

We are reminded here that we are pilgrims passing through. This is not our home. In Psalm 39:12 David prays, "Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear to my cry; do not be silent at my tears; for I am a stranger with You, a sojourner, as all my fathers were." David knew even as the King of Israel, living in and ruling the Promised Land, that his earthly kingdom was not his home. We know from Hebrews 11 that Abraham said that same thing. Abraham was called to go out to another land. He left Ur of the Chaldees with his wife, father, and family, and he travelled, obedient to God's call to go not even knowing where he was going. He was just told to get up and go and by faith he got up and went. When he arrived at the Promised Land he understood that the land was just that, a promise, a foreshadowing of his heavenly home.

Everything that we are given in this world is subject to change because in the end everything in this world is going to be burned up. The earth is going to go through the fire and be recreated without the taint or stain of sin. All that we have in this world will be burned up and only what is done for Christ will last.

In Ephesians 2:19 Paul reminds us, "Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God..." We belong with Him, with the King, as part of His family, adopted by His love through the blood of His Son. Philippians 3:20 says the same thing, "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." Our citizenship is in heaven.

Because of Whose we are and because of where our allegiances should be, he tells us to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul. The word abstain means to avoid, to flee, to go the other way. It doesn't mean think about it, play with it for a little while, and then leave it. It means as soon as we recognize what it is, run! Get away.

Where do these things originate that we are told to abstain from? 1 John 2:15 tells us that the lust, the desires of the flesh, these things are in and of the world and James 1:14 tells us

we are drawn to these things when our own flesh begins to express what it wants, what it craves. And these are things we are told that will hurt us, they will harm us. We must abstain from the things of this world, things that fuel our flesh to war against the Spirit. And it is only by walking in the Spirit that we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh (Gal. 5:16).

If we walk as we are supposed to walk, walking worthy of our calling – or as Paul has taught us in Philippians, having our conduct be worthy of the gospel – then we will be honorable. These are things that bring honor, that express value, that are right. Standing alone and doing what is right no matter the cost. This is doing what is honorable. These things would be the opposite of doing the works of the flesh, those things that we are to abstain from as they war against our souls.

In Galatians 5 we read this list of the works of the flesh, those things which are dishonorable: “Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

This list is not complete or comprehensive, but there is enough here that we see that we do every day, dishonorable things that grow from doubt, disbelief, and disobedience to the Word of God.

The contrast would be those things which are honorable and those are given to us in Galatians 5 also, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.”

These are the things the Spirit produces through us as opposed to the things that we produce in our own effort apart from Christ. Honorable conduct finds its roots here – doing what is right no matter the cost as we live surrendered lives submitted to the Lordship of Christ. Even if no one else stands with us, we will stand and do what is right as defined by God and His Word.

Do we do that for the praise and honor it brings to us? No! We do that for the praise and glory and honor that it gives to God. Letting our light shine glorifies God Jesus taught us in the Sermon in the Mount (Matt. 5:16). We are to have our conduct honorable among the Gentiles, and the word Gentiles just means the nations, “That when they speak against you as evildoers they may by your good works which they observe glorify God in the day of visitation.”

Peter reminds them of something very powerful here in verse 12. He says I want your conduct to be honorable because then the nations that see, that observe how you are living, they will glorify God in the day of visitation. For now, they will accuse you of being an evil doer. Today and in the days to come those who hold to a Biblical definition of marriage and gender are already called bigots, haters, homophobes, and all manner of despicable names. They will make slanderous accusations against us based on what we believe and what we say and how we act toward them. We wonder what can they honestly say that is negative about Christians who are striving to do what is right and just? Well, if you call good evil and evil good....

Here are just a few of the slanderous accusations against the church when Peter wrote this letter to give you an idea that there really is nothing new under the sun. The people in Rome were saying that Christians were terrorists. Nero himself accused them of setting fire to Rome and burning the city to the ground. That happened just before this letter was penned. And people retaliated against Christians as if they had indeed burned the city down in an act of terrorism against the Empire.

Christians were also accused of being atheists! Because they would not worship Caesar they were suspected of not believing in any god that was worth anything at all. We have writings where believers are labelled atheists in Rome.

When the Church met together for worship and observed the Lord's Supper imagine the rumors that spread when they spoke of eating the body and drinking the blood of Christ! Yes, they were accused of cannibalism and suspected of eating members of the church.

And everyone knows what happens if the economy stalls and people lose their jobs, right? So the church was accused of affecting the economy and trades. One example we've recently studied - remember Paul casting a demon out of the slave girl selling idols? The riot that ensued got him thrown into the Philippian jail.

Was the church guilty of any of these things? What motivated the people to slander and talk about the church this way? Does the world understand why we do what we do? Does the world understand the Word of God, or obedience to the Word of God? They can't! The gospel is foolishness to those who are perishing. They don't understand why we do what we do so we should not be surprised when they accuse us of crazy things like this.

That is why Peter says our conduct must be honorable so that when accusations start to fly it is difficult for them to stick. The world may not realize that our works are good until later when we are vindicated by God in the day of visitation, the day of judgment, but then they have no excuse and will be forced to glorify God for the good works that we did while they persecuted us. They will confess that Jesus is Lord because they will know it to be

true, but at that point in time it cannot be a confession of faith unto salvation, but a confession of truth blindly rejected as they have tried to gain the world and lost their soul. In fact, the good works that we have done will provide gospel light by which they will be condemned.

So as we live as part of a misunderstood minority in the midst of a hostile culture we must first live like what we are – aliens in exile. Some day we will be home!

Secondly in verses 13 and 14 Peter tells us that in order to live as submissive citizens of heaven we must submit to our earthly government. He says, “13 Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether to the king as supreme, 14 or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good.” To submit to God we must submit to earthly authority.

The word submit means “to voluntarily align ourselves under” someone. We willingly follow their authority and leadership by yielding and surrendering our own rights. But notice here, he says I want you to submit yourselves to every ordinance of man. The word ordinance does not refer to every single law passed by an earthly authority or government. That is important, because if the Bible told us that we had to obey every law that man enforced we would have a problem with that wouldn’t we? Even before this week! There are things codified in the laws of our nation that we disagree with because those laws run contrary to the Word of God, which we confess is our only infallible and final rule for life and godliness. So he doesn’t say submit yourselves to every law instituted by man. The word ordinance means institutions and refers to offices of authority. That is why he follows this with examples of the king and governor.

We have many....too many....human institutions that govern our lives and function as an authority over us. Federal, State, County, City just to name a few. And we are to submit to any institution, to any office that has authority over us. To a point (as long as we are not commanded to disobey God) we willfully yield to the governing authorities as they have been ordained by God. We are to strive to live honorably and peacefully (as much as depends on us, Paul says), by lining ourselves up under those in positions of authority.

In Jeremiah 29 God tells His people who had been captured and are living in exile in Babylon, “4 Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all who were carried away captive, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon: <sup>5</sup> Build houses and dwell *in them*; plant gardens and eat their fruit. <sup>6</sup> Take wives and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters—that you may be increased there, and not diminished.”

They have been captured and are by all rights prisoners of war, exiles in a foreign land, subject to a new nation and a new king, sent into exile as judgment from God for their

covenant violations and disobedience. Yet even in this wicked nation and with this pagan government we see men like Daniel and Nehemiah who were able to work their way up high into the ranks of government all the while living in such a way that honored God.

Jeremiah says, “You’ve been captured, but live your life! Get on with living your life as best you are able.” Now he does not say to be assimilated into this culture and way of life for the Babylonians, you still need to live according to the standards of God’s Word as His people. Ultimately here what God is telling us is that it really doesn’t matter what governmental authority is over us, He is still sovereign, and we are still responsible to do what is right in His eyes.

He goes on to say, “seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the Lord for it; for in its peace you will have peace.” He says to pray that the Babylonians will have peace. If they have peace you have peace.

“8 For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are in your midst deceive you, nor listen to your dreams which you cause to be dreamed. 9 For they prophesy falsely to you in My name; I have not sent them, says the Lord. 10 For thus says the Lord: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. 11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.”

He says I don’t want you to be Babylonian, but live your life while you are there. For us, we need not be Americans who are Christians – we should live as though we are Christians who happen to be in America!

In Mathew 22:21 someone asked Jesus if they should pay taxes to Caesar. Should they support the government even with all the evil that Rome did? He said, “Put together a crack unit of zealots and infiltrate the palace and assassinate Caesar and then elect someone who will make Christianity the state religion, because that will fix everything...,” right? No, He said, “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”

This is reflected in Romans 13, “Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. 4 For he is God’s minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. 5 Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but

also for conscience' sake. 6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. 7 Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor."

As we look at the text Paul tells us specifically that every soul must be subject to the governing authorities because there is no authority except from God. If someone is in a place of authority, good or bad, if God did not put them there then they would not be there. We may never understand why some of the rulers that the world has seen have been where they were. Obedience to them is obedience to God, up to the point that they tell us to disobey God and then we would rather obey God than man, all the while being willing to pay the consequences of civil disobedience.

We need to pray for our government that they might maintain peace and civil order, because when they do we all have peace and when they do not no one has peace. 1 Timothy 2:1-2 reminds us, "Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence." So in obedience to God we submit to authority and pray for those in authority even if, and perhaps especially if they are not doing what is right, and we are to be bold and preach the gospel to that authority, just as John the Baptist did.

But what do we do when the government, when those in authority, demand that we do something contrary to the Word of God? When talking about authority and government we always love to run right away to the exception, don't we? We cannot live dishonorable lives with disregard for earthly authority and then think that we have done well to obey God rather than men when the time comes. But there will come a time, sooner rather than later we see now, that they will tell us to do things that we simply cannot do.

Back to Acts, in chapter 4, we read, "18 So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. 20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." In Acts 5:28 the rulers asked, "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!" 29 But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men."

This points us to a central truth in what it means to be a submissive citizen of heaven, our obedience, even to human authority, is always prefaced upon obedience to the Lord. This is how we serve Christ.



Peter goes on in verse 15 and 16 and writes, “15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men— 16 as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God.” He has told us to live as what we are, as aliens in exile living honorably by abstaining from worldly lusts that war against the soul, and then to submit to all authority, and now the third thing he tells us about how to be a submissive citizen of heaven is simply to do good. Do Good – the word good means that which brings health. Do things that are spiritually, physically, and emotionally healthy. Things that promote life.

How do we know what is good and how do we define health? We must start with the Word of God. We must hone the skill of discernment to understand the difference between right and wrong, and between right and almost right. In doing this we are doing God’s will. Did you catch that? Do good and you are doing God’s will, and that by doing good you put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.

Again, there are many who don’t understand. They have no idea why we do what we do, and why we don’t do what we don’t do. They are ignorant. They will falsely accuse us, malign us, slander us, persecute us, and when they do revile us what are we supposed to do? Revile them back with a touch of sarcasm? No! When they revile and curse, we bless and pray for them. We do good when they do bad. We treat them with honor and respect whether they deserve it or not. We esteem them as better than us whether they are or not. We do good.

Now if they accuse us of doing evil and we are, and we retaliate, and we seek vengeance, that is where we get into serious trouble according to 1 Peter 4. And if they say bad things about us, let’s not react and tell them how good we are. The truth is that when they say we have been bad we could probably provide examples of when we’ve really been worse! Right? But here if we do good, we silence them because eventually the things they say just won’t stick.

In verse 16 he says we do good as free, but not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. How free are we in Christ? True freedom comes through knowing Christ – He is the way, the truth, and the life, and He said we will know the truth and the truth will make us free. And in knowing Him we learn the true greatness of what it means to be free. True freedom is understanding that I am not in control, I am not in charge, ever, and that it doesn’t depend on me! When I am faithless, He is faithful.

That is freeing isn’t it? We are never in control. The Bible teaches us that either sin is in control or the Holy Spirit is in control. It is never us. Read Romans 6 and 7.

We often think that freedom means independence and doing whatever I want to do. True freedom is found in serving Christ and serving others. So we do not yearn to be free so that

we get our way every time. That is using freedom as a cloak for sin. We find freedom in servitude, as blood bought slaves of Jesus Christ.

In 1 Corinthians 7:22, “For he who is called in the Lord while a slave is the Lord’s freedman. Likewise he who is called while free is Christ’s slave.” That means that whoever rules over us while we live on this earth should be able to expect our obedience and honorable conduct where we are able to obey.

1 Corinthians 8:9-13, “But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak. 10 For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol’s temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? 11 And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? 12 But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. 13 Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.” Don’t use your freedom to make yourself a slave of sin, or to make others stumble.

In 2 Thessalonians 3:7-9 he says, “7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; 8 nor did we eat anyone’s bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, 9 not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.”

Philippians 2:3 reminds us, “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.”

Here is the truth, we esteem all others as better because if God can save a sinner like you and like me, He can save anyone! No one is beyond the reach of God to save.

Finally then in verse 17, Peter writes, “Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.”

Just in case we’ve left anyone out – honor all people. Honor means to hold in high esteem. Can we honor sinners? When we see that all men are created in the image of God, and all men are born sinners, and all men need the good news of the gospel, and all men need to repent of their sin and trust Christ, we cannot dishonor them. Yet so much of what we have seen this week has been the church dishonoring sinners, and many reply that they do so because these sinners are dishonoring themselves with their sin. Look – we do not honor them because they are honorable in what they do. We honor them because deep down we must confess that anyone who is created in the image of God is honorable. They may try to twist and distort and reject the image of God in them, but it is still there. Men cannot undo

what God has done. We honor all people because all people reflect the glory of God and will serve to praise Him in salvation or in judgment.

While we are honoring all people, love the church. We share a common citizenship and as we travel through this fallen world together we must live like the family we are! We must bear one another's burdens, comfort those who need to be comforted, correct those who need correction, all the while serving one another in a spirit of love and sacrifice. We will not find acceptance or solace in the world. We shouldn't even try. That is why God has made us members of one another. Many members, one body.

So we honor all people and love the brotherhood. Then he says, "Fear God." When you have a right perspective about Who God is in His holiness and perfection, how can we not fear Him? And why do we fear men more than we fear Him? What can men do to us?

Peter then ends this paragraph of text by saying, "Honor the king." And here is some insight for you, he uses a specific word here that indicates that he meant a specific king. He meant Nero. Honor the Emperor. Honor Caesar. Who is at the very heart of the persecution of these people to whom Peter is writing? It is Nero. He is brutal. Immoral. Wicked beyond imagination. Vile in his passions and evil in his practice. He has accused the church. He has crucified them by the hundreds and even thousands. He has sought to bring them to extinction. What is Peter thinking?

When he said honor all people there must have been agreement. Ok, we can do that. We love everybody to some extent. He said love the brotherhood, Ok, that is even easier, these are my brothers and sisters in Christ who are suffering with me. Fear God – yes, we love God and fear God and yearn to be rescued by God. Oh, and finally, hold Nero in high esteem.

What? Honor Caesar? Honor the President? Honor the Supreme Court in the midst of injustice and corruption? Honor those who are leading us to destruction as a nation? Honor those who may soon be arresting and persecuting Christians? Honor those who call evil good and good evil? I'd rather blast them on social media, and call for their impeachment, and campaign for their replacement, and see them in chains! They have destroyed the nation I love! They have taken away my freedom to be free from all responsibility! They have brought judgment upon our heads! HONOR THOSE PEOPLE?

Who put Caesar in power? Who put our government in power? Who puts every authority in that place of authority? God. And as wicked as these rulers may be God has still ordained their authority to accomplish His purposes because here is the truth – God is sovereign! We profess it but we don't believe it.

If He has decided to glorify Himself through the judgment of our nation by turning us over to our sin then praise God! Yes we mourn for our nation, but we must exalt God for His holiness and we must confess that He has been patient and longsuffering with us. He has let us go on in our sin as a nation much longer than He had to.

We must live like what we are, aliens in exile, (and to be clear, we did not become aliens in exile on Friday, we became aliens in exile the moment Jesus exercised authority to become King of our life) we are to live as aliens in exile while abstaining from worldly lusts that war against our souls. We must be submissive to authority. We must do good. We must honor all people. Whatever the state of the nation, however wicked our rulers, however vile their edicts and judgments, we must remember that we represent Jesus Christ, we are shining the light in a dark world. May God help us to be faithful and do what is right, even to those who are doing wrong.

The days ahead will refine the church, reveal the strength of our faith, revive the faithful, and give us all ample opportunities to do what is honorable and good in spite of persecution. God is still in control. Our nation still needs the gospel. Our leaders still need our prayers.

And while here Jesus will never leave us or forsake us no matter how dark the days become. He is the Beginning and the End. He is the King of kings and Lord of lords. He is, and He will come back for us.

Will He find us faithful when He does?

Let us pray.