

Friends Grandpa – Quiet – Contributed to conversations through aphoristic sayings

- We got in trouble at the pool – ‘Poke the hornet’s nest your bound to get stung’
- Talking about a bully at school – ‘They can’t get your goat if they don’t know where it’s tied’
- Early 80’s...Cold War...Duck and Cover – ‘Every generation said the world was bad...right’

It’s a wise perspective...and something we can learn from in Christianity as well...

Every generation has talked...church is under attack...politically, culturally...every generation = right!

Is our political and cultural landscape, worldwide, fixed on attacking the Church? Yes...Always has  
Biblical word for it...persecution | Hostility experienced as a result of identification with Christ  
Jesus = Jn. 15:20 ‘If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.’

Paul = 2 Tim. 3:12 ‘Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted’

So...if Jesus promised it and Paul proclaimed it...we can comfortably arrive at this conclusion:

BI – Persecution Has Purpose

Is persecution outside the sovereign control of God? Do we believe God is weak? Good?

God allows or ordains persecution against His people for a redemptive purpose

Persecution’s not 1<sup>st</sup> century problem or 3<sup>rd</sup> world problem | Christian’s problem...Bible Solution

**Three ‘What to do’s’ persecution Comes** Cause + Effect + Result | Exorcise demon – Persecution – Saved  
(16) As we were going to the place of prayer (Met Lydia...dynamically different woman) we were met  
by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune telling.

- Demon-possessed, fortune-telling, slave girl (Resume)
- Much gain: Greeks & Romans stock divination | Military Commanders – Emperors | Gold Mine  
(17) She followed Paul and us, crying out, ‘These men are servants of the Most High God, who  
proclaim to you the way of salvation.’ | Odd...Coke advertising for Pepsi
- The demon was trying to intermingle the message of the occult with the message of Christianity  
(18) And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, ‘I  
command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.’ And it came out of her that very hour
- Who was Paul annoyed with? Not the girl, but the demonic...attempted association gospel
- Out of deep grief for the girl he commands the demon to release from her and be gone!

You think Paul would be praised for his kindness...no...persecution...softball sized hail! **READ 19-24**

1. **Count the Cost (19-24)** | Calculate the consequences

Paul had taken away the slave owners golden goose – ATM – Printing Press

Losing income | Drag Paul and Silas into marketplace | Before the governing bodies...they lie.

- Law forbidding Roman citizens from practicing foreign religions...not their complaint | \$\$\$
- Emperor Claudius...ordered all Jews expelled from Rome...Magistrate & Crowd  
Tore clothes off | Beaten over and over publicly | Wooden stocks dungeon  
PLACE YOURSELF – Sounds...sight...smell | Paul knew this was a possibility

Paul knew repercussions: Taking away source of income | Practicing Christian Evangelism...WORHT IT  
Owners saw girl as property for prosperity | Paul saw a person in pain...more...On mission from Lord  
SCALE – Left side vs. Right side | Right must heavier | Counted the cost...calculated the consequences  
Our faith will cost us something: Family – Friends – Finances – Freedom...Fear never cost obedience  
In the face of persecution disobedience is a price we must be unwilling to pay

First ‘What to do’s’ when persecution comes...Count the Cost | Second...

2. **Worship in the Waiting (25)** Praise through the pain

‘About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God’

- Sticky with blood | Clothes have been ripped from their bodies | Bound to a cell wall
- Stocks = Pressed in and clamped in place...back against the wall...can’t lay down

And their response to all this discomfort and pain...audible prayer and worship

Praising God does not depend on circumstances

Christians do not rejoice in the hardship of their circumstances...

We rejoice in the glorious truth that the sovereign God controls every circumstance of life

- Key is to be filled with the Spirit | Joy is a fruit of the Spirit
- The problem isn’t circumstances...lack of living controlled by the Spirit

Richard Wurmbrand – Romanian Preacher – Atheist State – Imprisoned and Tortured 14 years

- Tortured for Christ ‘The living Jesus will give you joy amid tribulation’

To worship in the waiting is one of the most challenging Christian disciplines

**To turn our earthly trial into heavenly incense**

- God...I’m doing what you asked of me and I hurt...
- God...I’m committed to your will and your work and wickedness surrounds me  
Send me your light...I will worship in this darkness...I trust you...I praise you  
(v.16) going to the place to pray...**God found them a different one. Not by the riverside...jail**  
Will we praise God in jail as we would by the riverside?

**PURPOSE!** It amplifies the volume of our witness...after the comma in v.25

And the prisoners were listening to them

‘The faith that can be destroyed by suffering is not a faith at all’

**It’s one thing to worship through the wins of life...but to worship in our wounds...powerful witness!**

We don’t praise God in our hardship because we think he’ll change our situation,  
but because we trust Him despite our situation

**Amidst persecution we need to trade our whining for worship**

**‘What to do’s’ when persecution comes...Count the Cost | Worship in the Waiting...**

3. **Expect the Extraordinary (26-34)** Believe the improbable | **Cause + Effect = RESULT | READ 26-34**

Extraordinary – Chorus of praise was interrupted so God could respond

Earthquake – Foundations of the Prison shook – Cell doors opened – Bonds unfastened

This wasn’t some divine parlor trick...God showing off...doesn’t need the publicity...divine purpose!

- God shakes the earth...and it wasn’t so Paul and Silas could be set free...it’s so the jailer could  
The chains that God was breaking were not those around Paul and Silas’ feet, but the jailers heart  
God is in the business of breaking bondage

About to kill himself – Willing to commit suicide because he fears the consequences of an empty jail

- Roman soldiers who allowed a prisoner to escape, no matter the cause, paid with his own life
  - He was deciding to avoid the humiliation and execution
- Paul and Silas pause to save the man’s life...both Physically and Spiritually
  - The Jailer Woke – House next to the prison...earthquake...plenty of time to get away

Paul and Silas were not on an escape mission but a rescue mission

The jailer comes in...expecting to fall on his own sword...

- **What are you doing here? | Waiting for you?**

Slow all of verse 29-30 down and play it out in your mind as it actually happened

**Play this out | Called for Lights | Rushed in | Trembling with Fear**

Fell Down...Oh the heavenly irony...forced to knees now bowed down...what must I do?!?

**BELIEVE IN JESUS AND BE SAVED! - Six-word sermon**

In that moment...persecution had displayed its purpose

- Do you think Paul or Silas cared about their wounds in that moment...their wounds didn’t matter
  - The only wounds they were willing to discuss were the ones taken by Jesus! **GOSPEL**

The jailer went from a man seconds from suicide to baptized – Moments from death to eternal life!  
A jailer and his family became baptized believer who tended to the wounds of those they persecuted!

**EXTRAORDINARY...we should expect it because we serve an EXTRAPRDINARY GOD**

**Persecution Fans the Flames of Evangelism**

In a cultural landscape that lied about their intentions

In a political landscape that punished them for their faith in Jesus

EVERY GENERATION HAS HAD THE CHURCH UNDER ATTACK

Persecution Has Purpose:

- We count the cost – Worship in the Waiting – God will bring the Extraordinary...expect it!