

Sermon 113: Enduring Persecution: Luke 21:12-19

Text: Luke 21:12-19 "But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. And it shall turn to you for a testimony. Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. But there shall not an hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye your souls..."

Summary: Despite the intense struggles of the last days, God's people have several layers of hope.

Proposition: He wants you to endure persecution by resting in His tender care.

Interrogative: How can we do this?

Truth 1: Trouble: Realize the last days will be tumultuous days:

21:12 "But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake..."

- **Trouble because of timing:** "Before these days..."
 - **Ordinary struggles:**
 - **Job 14:1** "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble..."
 - **Ecclesiastes 1:14** "I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit..."
 - Internal struggles
 - Physical struggles
 - Interpersonal struggles
 - Natural struggles
 - **Extraordinary struggles:**
 - **In the last days:** The period of history when Christ's coming is immanent.
 - **2 Timothy 3:1** "In the last days perilous times shall come..."
 - **2 Peter 3:3** "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts..."
 - **Before the Second Coming:** The portion of the Tribulation when there will be signs of His coming

Matthew 24:21 "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened..."

- **Trouble because of identification:** "For my name's sake..."
 - **A real distinction will create trouble: Matthew 5:11-13**
"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. Ye are the salt of the earth..."
 - **A godly pattern of life will create trouble: 2 Timothy 3:12**
"All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution..."
 - **Submitting to Christ supremely will create trouble: 1 Peter 3:14-15** "If ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts..."

Truth 2: Opportunity: Realize that God will bring good out of the evil of those days: 21:13 "And it shall turn to you for a testimony..."

- **An important Biblical principle:** God uses everything, even evil to accomplish good.
 - **James 1:2-3** "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience..."
 - **Romans 8:28** "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose..."
 - **2 Corinthians 4:17** "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory..."
 - **Genesis 50:20** "As for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive..."
- **The specific application of that principle:** "It shall turn to you for a testimony..."
 - **Opportunity to demonstrate the genuineness of our faith: 1 Peter 1:7** "The trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ..."
 - **Opportunity to proclaim the gospel to the skeptic: 1 Peter 3:15** "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that

asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear..."

- **Opportunity to demonstrate the power of genuine faith in Christ: 2 Corinthians 1:5** "As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ..."

Truth 3: Wisdom: Realize that He will give wisdom when it is desperately needed: 21:14-15 "Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist..."

- **This is a heavy burden to carry.**
- **Christ did not give the information to burden His followers.**
- **His desire was to provide perspective and encouragement:**
 - **Do not obsess over this information:** "Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer"
 - **Rest in His promise to provide wisdom:** "I will give you a mouth and wisdom..."
 - **Rest in the power of that wisdom:** "All your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist..."
- **God is committed to guiding His children in crises: James 1:5** "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him..."

Truth 4: Abandonment: Realize that this trouble may leave you abandoned, betrayed, and hated: 21:16-17 "And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake..."

- **As if the burden of persecution is not enough, Christ adds another layer to this information.**
- **He adds the potential for division on the most personal level.**
- **This is not the only place scripture describes these potential situations:**
 - **Our allegiance to Christ may put us at odds with family: Luke 12:51-53** "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law..."
 - **This higher allegiance can be extremely offensive and even sever these relationships: Luke 14:26** "If any man

come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple..."

- **We have comfort for these situations:**

- **He gives us the body of Christ: Matthew 12:48-50** "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother..."
- **He comes alongside us: Psalm 27:10** "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up..."
- **He is a father to those who are abandoned: Psalm 68:5-6** "A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation God setteth the solitary in families: he bringeth out those which are bound with chains..."

Truth 5: Peace: Rest in His promises to preserve His people against all threats: 21:18-19 "But there shall not an hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye your souls..."

- **Two sides to the statements:**

- **Present protection:** "There shall not an hair of your head perish..."
- **Ultimate deliverance:** "In your patience possess ye your souls..."

- **Explained:**

- **Protection:** God actively and providentially protects His people from untold dangers.
- **Presence:** He never abandons His children when they suffer.
- **The tools to persevere:** When He permits suffering, He always equips His children to rise above what they encounter.
- **Growth:** He uses everything to develop maturity in His children.
- **Eternal preservation:** Every Christian will one day be delivered from this present evil world and be saved into eternal glory.

Applying the passage:

- **Realize we are living in the last days.**
- **We do not know when Christ will return, but His return is immanent, and we must be ready for it.**
- **Despite deep uncertainty, there is real comfort:**
 - He will always bring good out of evil.
 - He will use suffering to reveal the genuine quality of our faith.
 - He will use it to show the world the power of life in Christ.
 - He will open doors to proclaim the gospel through our suffering.
 - He will give us the wisdom we need when we face it.

- He will lift us up when we are abandoned.
- **Rest in His tender care:**
 - Rest in His care when it insulates you from evil.
 - Rest in His presence that will never abandon you.
 - Rest in the tools He gives you to endure suffering.
 - Rest in His fatherly care that develops spiritual maturity.
 - Rest in your future glory.

Closing Scripture: James 5:7-11 "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door. Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy..."