

Acting out in persecution

I. Introduction-

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. Acts 1:8

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. Gal 2:20

Acting out= to behave badly or in a socially unacceptable manner

Acting out as a Christian= to behave as Jesus would in our lives, our trials, failures and in our relationships with others.

Persecution= the act of persecuting those who differ in origin, religion, or social outlook

Persecute= to harass or punish in a manner designed to injure, grieve, or afflict

A. The response to acting out for Jesus-

As they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand. Acts 4:1

B. We must choose between obeying man or God

They called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard." And when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way to punish them, because of the people, for all were praising God for what had happened. Acts 4:18

Persecution= the act or practice of persecuting especially those who differ in origin, religion, or social outlook

Persecute= to harass or punish in a manner designed to injure, grieve, or afflict

B. Jesus who only did good- healing, feeding teaching people to love God was persecuted

"Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Mat 5:11

"I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away. They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. Jn 16:1

Persecute= to harass or punish in a manner designed to injure, grieve, or afflict

C. The disciples died for their acting out for Jesus

II. Why persecution of the innocent

A. The dark hates the light-

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. This is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. Jn 3:3 & 19

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. II Tim 3:16

"If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. Jn 8:31

The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever. Ps 119:160

"times change, truth does not", **Shane Idleman, Westside Christian fellowship**

B. Jesus is divisive-

"Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. Mat 10:34

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. Jn 14:5

Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few. Mat 7:13

Commented [CC1]:

If our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. II Cor 4:3

In 2022 67% identify as Christian , 2% understand and follow biblical Christianity

C. The call to follow-

Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Mat 16:24

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. Phil 1:21

"Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" I Cor 15:53

III. How should we respond to persecution?

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Repay no one evil for evil. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, -- "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head."

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Rom 12:21

A. Overcoming evil with Jesus' attitude-

If when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. I Pet 2:20

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B. How to personally prepare for persecution?

"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you. "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. Mat 5:38

Acting out as a Christian-- to behave as Jesus would in our lives, our trials, failures and in our relationships with others.

B. If I die, I die-

If you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish. Ester 4:14

The Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. Acts 20:22

IV. Summary and application-

A. John Chau, Acting out for Jesus

<https://www.persecution.com/>

B. Jim Elliot acting out for Jesus

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose"

Jim Elliot, Born: October 8, 1927, [Portland, OR](#)

Died: January 8, 1956, [Rio Curaray](#)

Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Mat 16:24

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