

**TIME OF REFLECTION**

“Why is the world silent while Christians are being slaughtered in the Middle East and Africa?... Historians may look back at this period and wonder if people had lost their bearings.... The United Nations has been mostly mum. World leaders seem to be consumed with other matters.... Why doesn't the slaughter of Christians seem to activate their social antennas?”

~Ronald S. Lauder, president of the World Jewish Congress in the NY Times

“...whenever we are discouraged, the Lord reminds us that it is not because of our foolishness or for doing anything wrong that we are facing this legal issue. It is for preaching the gospel and obediently following God's command.”

~Myanmar Pastor Aung Tun Oo, falsely accused of “denigrating Buddhism”

“My wrists are burning me, it is hard to breathe. My neck is encased in an iron collar that the guard can tighten with a huge nut. A long chain drags along on the filthy ground. This connects my neck to the handcuffed hand that pulls me like a dog on a lead. Deep within me, a dull fear takes me towards the depths of darkness. A lacerating fear that will never leave me.”

~Asia Bibi, Pakistani woman who spent eight years on death row for false charges of “blasphemy”, as reported by French journalist Anne-Isabelle Tillet

“One of the basic facts of contemporary religious history is that Christians around the world are persecuted on an extraordinary scale — by mobs and pogroms in India, jihadists and United States-allied governments in the Muslim world, secular totalitarians in China and North Korea. Yet...this reality is barely visible in the Western media, and rarely called by name and addressed head-on by Western governments and humanitarian institutions. (‘Islamophobia’ looms large; talk of ‘Christophobia’ is almost nonexistent.)”

~Ross Douthat in New York Times Editorial (4-23-2019)

“Some Chinese...discern in Christianity the roots...behind the development of social justice, civil society and rule of law, all things they hope to see in China.... One civil-rights activist says that, of the 50 most-senior civil-rights lawyers in China probably half are Christians.”

~The Economist (11-1-2014)

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## *Worship through the Word*

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**SERMON** – “*The Wooing of the Father’s Love*” – Pastor Don Willeman

**SERMON PASSAGE** – *selected passages (ESV)*

*John 6*

<sup>35</sup> Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. <sup>36</sup> But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. <sup>37</sup> All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. <sup>38</sup> For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. <sup>39</sup> And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. <sup>40</sup> For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day....

<sup>44</sup> “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. <sup>45</sup> It is written in the Prophets, ‘And they will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me— <sup>46</sup> not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father. <sup>47</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life....

<sup>63</sup> “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. <sup>64</sup> But there are some of you who do not believe.” (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.) <sup>65</sup> And he said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.”...

<sup>70</sup> Jesus answered them, “Did I not choose you,

the twelve? And yet one of you is a devil.” <sup>71</sup> He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray him.

*2 Corinthians 4*

<sup>3</sup> And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. <sup>6</sup> For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

*Matthew 11*

<sup>25</sup> At that time Jesus declared, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; <sup>26</sup> yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. <sup>27</sup> All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. <sup>28</sup> Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”