

14. TRIBALISM AND THE MYTH OF PERSECUTION

BEFORE WE CONTINUE IN THE SERIES, WE'RE GOING TO PULL OVER, STRETCH OUR LEGS, AND HAVE A FRANK CONVERSATION WITH OURSELVES. WHAT IS YOUR WORST-CASE SCENARIO? COULD THAT WORST-CASE SCENARIO BE CONGRUENT WITH A LIFE OF OBEDIENCE? NO ONE DAY-DREAMS ABOUT WORST-CASE SCENARIOS. WE THINK THAT IF WE JUST "OBEY A LITTLE MORE," ALL OUR PROBLEMS WILL BE SORTED OUT AND GOD'S BLESSING WILL FLOW TO US LIKE A MIGHTY RIVER OF DIVINE FAVOR. OBEDIENCE EARNS NOTHING. IT SIMPLY FREES YOU UP TO EXPERIENCE JESUS. IS HE TRULY YOUR GREAT REWARD? SOMETIMES JESUS' LEADERSHIP CONFUSES US BECAUSE WE'VE BOUGHT INTO THE MYTH OF PERSECUTION.

I. THE EXCLUSIVITY OF JESUS AND THE DANGER OF "US AND THEM"

- A. Jesus is exclusive, and His exclusivity bears down upon us both for salvation and satisfaction.
 - 1) [John 14:6](#)
 - 2) [Ephesians 1-2](#); [Galatians 3-4](#); [Romans 8](#); [Colossians 1:13](#)
 - a) we are no longer children of wrath but now children of promise
- B. We are citizens of the covenantal commonwealth but aliens in this world.
 - 1) be in this world and not of it ([John 17](#))
 - a) it would be difficult to bear faithful verbal and practical witness of the Good News of the Kingdom - that is soon to be restored to Israel - to all nations and people groups if you don't have anything to do with those nations
 - b) we are not supposed to be isolated because we "do life" and "run with" people who live just like us in our little Christian bubbles but because our allegiances exclude us from the lusts of the flesh in this age ([Matthew 24, 28](#); [Acts 1](#))
 - i. [John 16:33](#); [Revelation 5](#)
- C. The victory of overcoming looks unmistakably like a scarred, slaughtered Lamb ([Revelation 5:6](#)). The one who suffered will lead you into suffering.
 - 1) consider the distinct possibility that Jesus' goodness to you is not contingent on circumstances. Maybe He'll leverage difficult circumstances to produce something glorious in you that you'll take with you in eternity ([John 15](#))
 - 2) the one who suffered will also lead you beside still waters ([Psalm 23](#))

MARANATHA GLOBAL BIBLE STUDY

DIFFICULT THINGS // STEPHANIE QUICK

- a) sometimes you take a nap, sometimes you get lead into a wolfpack. He is a good leader
- 3) most of us, on some level, think that obedience to Jesus opens the door for our best-case scenario life, but that isn't unequivocally true
 - a) the danger of this type of thinking is that we insolate ourselves with people who think and act like ourselves
- D. The triumph of overcoming is forever marked by the whips and nails of the Place of the Skull. Obedience is wrought through suffering, even if you're Jesus ([Hebrews 5:8](#))
 - 1) you can't have obedience without endurance or vice versa
 - 2) Jesus forged endurance through the things He suffered, not through His own comfort
 - a) His ambition is that we would be conformed into His own image, so even in this we must be like our Teacher

II. SUFFERING, PERSECUTION, AND INCONVENIENCES

In life, we suffer adversity, persecution, and inconveniences. If we are drunk on a best-case scenario dream, we'll believe the myth of persecution: that inconveniences are persecution. This hinders us from stepping outside of our bubble of Christian comfort. We have to rebuke the spirit of tribalism that bars us from engaging with the world as being in the world but not of it. In living through this "[present evil age](#)" ([Galatians 1:4](#)), the dominion of darkness, while holding onto allegiance to the Kingdom of light, we face the prospect of persecution and sometimes we face *inconveniences*. **Persecution and inconvenience are not synonymous.** John the Baptist was one who was resilient, endured in obedience, and didn't complain ([Matthew 11:1-9](#))

- A. SUFFERING
 - 1) can be adversity, unhealed sickness, loss, etc.
 - 2) you can and will suffer a great many things in your life. Much of that is just the consequence of the curse Jesus delivers us from
 - a) He cares about the things you are suffering and He WILL redeem it
- B. PERSECUTION
 - 1) persecution is suffering explicitly and specifically on behalf of the name of Jesus. This requires, then, that you actually bear the name of Jesus and behave accordingly
 - a) it is not throwing on your Jesus t-shirt and looking for someone to make fun of you
 - 2) in the end, no matter how much we lose or what we suffer, we get **Him** ([Romans 8:31-39-9:5](#))
 - 3) you can hold your head up, knowing anything you suffer simply because you were living in obedience to Jesus will be remembered and rewarded. In the end, nothing is truly lost ([Matthew 19:28-30](#))
- C. INCONVENIENCES (the story of E Company in Bastogne)
 - 1) don't get caught up in complaining about inconveniences or get deterred by actual persecution
 - 2) if pagans behave like pagans and then bump into someone who



MARANATHA GLOBAL BIBLE STUDY

DIFFICULT THINGS // STEPHANIE QUICK

just happens to be Christian, **that is not persecution**. It's an **inconvenience**

- a) we cannot claim to be persecuted if we are not actually doing anything to merit persecution
- 3) the myth of persecution leads us to believe that we are being persecuted simply because we're experiencing petty consequences of the curse post-exile from Eden. **The myth of persecution baits us into a cowardly lack of resilience.** The myth of persecution pulls you back from ever putting yourself in the position to be persecuted to begin with. The myth of persecution will kill your fruit before you ever bear it
 - a) our responsibility requires incredible resilience, but we are crafted for resiliency and built for endurance. We can bear faithful witness of the Gospel of the Kingdom
- 4) the whole Body of Jesus has room to grow up a little bit - and the whole Body of Jesus will ([Ephesians 4](#)) The Bride will be "made ready" ([Revelation 19:7](#)) In fact, this maturity and "readiness" to be a suitable helpmeet for the Lion-Lamb who overcame is forged only through suffering

III. HOW AMBASSADORS MUST BEHAVE

- A. Apostolic Examples of Persecution
 - 1) throughout the book of Acts, the catalyst for persecution against the apostles and disciples of "the way" was *preaching the gospel*
- B. How To *Not* Behave
 - 1) idiot - you are neither wise as a serpent nor gentle as a dove and will probably bring consequences upon yourself
 - 2) wimp - you white-knuckle the gospel because you're afraid someone will be mean to you if they don't like it
 - 3) bully - you weaponize the name of Jesus to give you something to beat other people up with and blame them when they are hurt by you. Their accusations are not a form of "persecution" against you. Don't insult the name of Jesus like that
- C. Mechanisms of Maturity
 - 1) pray for and bless those who persecute you ([Matthew 5:44-48](#))
 - 2) serve your enemies ([Proverbs 25:22](#))
 - 3) turn the other cheek ([Matthew 5:39](#))
- D. Are we willing to walk this road even if it leads us into a "worst-case scenario" and we don't get our "best life" now? Will we be so undaunted by suffering and resilient that we serve someone else in their suffering ([James 1](#))? Will we belong to Jesus without becoming tribal?