

3-3-2024, COTR Texarkana

Title: Trouble with a Capital, "T", pt-3

Purpose: Provoke Christians to respond in a Biblical way when facing persecution or trouble from an unbelieving world.

Truth for Today: Christians will face trouble and persecution from an unbelieving world but Jesus will be with us.

Text: John 16:33

Topic: Trouble, Persecution, Endurance, Holy Spirit, Opportunity

Series Title: Trouble with a Capital, "T"

Series purpose: Provoke people to face trouble with an unshakable faith in God.

Trouble with a Capital, "T", pt-3

- I. Introduction (1) **Prophecy**: you're being pulled back into old way of life. Temptation is strong and you need prayer to keep following Jesus. (2) **Mortgage** bulletin wrong \$34,098
 - A. Review series, Trouble with a Capital, "T". Sandwich, **[Jn. 16:33 (NIV)]** "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. **In this world you will have trouble (NLT many trials and sorrows). But take heart (NKJV be of good cheer)! I have overcome the world.**"] Jesus is preparing his followers for trouble and persecution from an unbelieving world. This is what we will talk about today.
 1. In week 1, Job faced trouble because satan attacked him. Last week we dealt with the question, 'Is all trouble bad or can some trouble be good for us?' (1) Trouble was good for Jonah because it made him get back on track with God. (2) Trouble was good for Abraham because it deepened his faith, (3) Trouble was good for Paul because it made him depend on God more.
 - B. Title: Trouble with a Capital, "T", pt-3. Christians will face trouble and persecution from an unbelieving world.
- II. **Why does the world persecute and cause trouble for Christians?**
 - A. Context conversion, **[Acts 9:19–23 (NLT)]** Saul...²⁰...**began preaching about Jesus**...saying, "He is indeed the Son of God!" ²¹ All who heard him were amazed. "Isn't this the same man who caused such devastation among Jesus' followers in Jerusalem?"... "And didn't he come here to arrest them and take them in chains to the leading priests?"...²³ After a while **some of the Jews plotted together to kill him.**
 1. Paul used to be a Jewish Pharisee on a mission to stop the Christian movement. He was miraculously converted to Christianity. Now, because of his belief in Jesus his Jewish friends want to kill him. Why? Jesus tells us.
 2. **John 15:18–22 (NLT)** "**If the world hates you**, remember that it hated me first. ¹⁹ The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. **I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you.** ²⁰...Since they persecuted me, naturally **they will persecute you**...²¹ **They will do all this to you because of me**, for they have **rejected the one who sent me.**
 - a. Because we love Jesus, the world troubles and persecutes Christians. When we live for Jesus, we become part of the cosmic war between good and evil, satan and God. Unbelievers are unwittingly allies of satan.

- B. **Pic world map³ Open Doors³**: 365 million Christians around the world suffer high levels of persecution and discrimination for their faith. 295,120 Christians were forced to leave their homes, go into hiding in-country or leave the country last year. 4,998 Christians were murdered for their faith last year. 14,766 churches and public Christian properties were attacked last year.
- C. In America: (1) Church shootings and violence are increasing. FRC: Attacks on churches have increased nearly 800 percent in less than six years. Last year, 436 acts of hostility against churches occurred. (2) Christians lose their jobs because of a FB post on marriage. (3) Unbelievers laugh at us and exclude us (e.g. pray meal), (4) Lawsuits occur when Christian businesses won't participate in same sex marriage, etc
- III. **What did Jesus say about trouble and persecution believers would face?**
- A. Early church, [**Matthew 10:17–23 (NLT)**] ...beware! For you will be handed over to the courts and will be **flogged with whips** in the synagogues. ¹⁸ You will **stand trial** ...because you are my followers...²² And all nations will **hate you because you are my followers**...²³ When you are persecuted in one town, **flee** to the next...]
1. This happened to the early church and is happening around the world today.
- B. Great Tribulation, [**Luke 21:12–18 (NLT)**]...there will be a time of **great persecution**. You will be dragged into **synagogues** and **prisons**, and you will stand **trial** before kings and governors **because you are my followers**...¹⁶ Even **those closest to you**—your parents, brothers, relatives, and friends—**will betray you**. They will even **kill** some of you. ¹⁷ And **everyone will hate you because you are my followers**.
- C. Heaven, [**Luke 6:22–36 (NLT)**] What **blessings await you** when people **hate** you and **exclude** you and **mock** you...because you follow the Son of Man. ²³ When that happens, **be happy**...leap for joy! For a **great reward awaits you in heaven**.]
1. Any trouble or persecution we face on earth will soon be over. Heaven is forever.
- IV. **How should we respond when we face trouble or persecution because we're Christians?**
- A. Adopt the mindset: With the Holy Spirit's help, I will endure whatever trouble I face and not deny the Lord. Context end time events, [**Mt. 24:9–14 (NLT)**] "Then you will be **arrested, persecuted, and killed**. You will be **hated all over the world** because you are my followers. ¹⁰ And **many will turn away from me and betray and hate each other**...¹³ But **the one who endures to the end** will be saved.]"
1. Def. endure: to undergo hardship without giving in.⁵ Don't stop following Jesus when trouble comes.
- B. Respond in love to those who persecute us because we love Jesus. Jesus, [**Luke 6:22–36 (NLT)**] What **blessings await you** when people **hate you and exclude you and mock you** and **curse you** as evil because you follow the Son of Man...²⁷ "But...I say, **love your enemies! Do good to those who hate you**. ²⁸ **Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you**...³⁵...and you will truly be acting as children of the Most High, for he is kind to those who are unthankful and wicked. ³⁶ You must be **compassionate** (*NIV be merciful*), just as your Father is compassionate.]" We feel sorry for them and want to help them because they are lost sinners.

1. E.g., Stephen stoned, [Acts 7:59–60 (NLT) His accusers took off their coats and laid them at the feet of a young man named Saul. As they stoned him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”⁶⁰ He fell to his knees, shouting, “**Lord, don’t charge them with this sin!**” And with that, he died.]...and was instantly pain-free in heaven.
 - a. Why did Stephen ask God to be merciful to the people who killed him? [Vs. 27 I say, **love your enemies! Do good to those who hate you.**²⁸ **Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you...**³⁵...and you will truly be acting as children of the Most High.]
 - b. What happened to Saul? The next chapter Jesus appeared to Him and He got saved then became one of the greatest preachers the world has ever known. This happened because Stephen loved him. Blessed him and prayed for him.
 - C. Expect the Holy Spirit to give you supernatural grace in trouble or persecution.
 1. [Acts 7:54–55 (NLT) The Jewish leaders were infuriated by Stephen’s accusation, and they **shook their fists at him in rage.**⁵⁵ But Stephen, full of the **Holy Spirit, gazed steadily into heaven and saw the glory of God, and he saw Jesus standing in the place of honor at God’s right hand.**]
 2. If we face trouble or persecution, the same Holy Spirit will give us grace and supernatural ability like He did Stephen.
- V. Conclusion: See trouble and persecution as an opportunity to witness
1. [Mt. 10:18 (NLT) ... You will **stand trial...because you are my followers.** But **this will be your opportunity to tell the rulers and other unbelievers about me.**¹⁹ When you are **arrested**, don’t worry about how to respond or what to say. **God will give you the right words at the right time.**²⁰ For it is not you who will be speaking—it will be the Spirit...speaking through you.] This reinforces our main mission as followers of Jesus; tell others about Him.
 2. **Video God’s Not Dead**^{1,2} Josh didn’t deny Jesus when he was persecuted. He used it as an opportunity to reach his class and campus for Christ. We should do the same.
- VI. Response
- A. Prayer
 - B. Souls
- VII. Bibliography/ Resources: Logos Bible Software and Library, Platinum Edition, was used to prepare this message.
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