

Book of Hebrews Part 38: 10:33-39; Facing Christian Persecution in the United States of America (12/07/2019)

The following text is a message from Corner Fringe Ministries that was presented by Daniel Joseph. The original presentation can be viewed at <https://cornerfringe.com/media/7kt59hd/book-of-hebrews-part-38>.

*Portions of this document have been edited from the video message to better present a comprehensive, written document. Special attention was given to preserve the original context, but this document is not verbatim. Scripture verses are in the red text with other quotes in blue. Therefore, it is recommended that this document is printed in color. The Hebrew words are generally accompanied by the transliterate, English word. In most cases, the Hebrew is to be read from right to left.

Last week we ended off by looking at Hebrews 10:33 which reads, “partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated”. The writer acknowledges that his brethren have been suffering. They've suffered persecution. They've gone through trials and tribulations. He doesn't just acknowledge that, but he also acknowledges the fact that not only were they willing to go through this themselves, they were willing to stand with those who were going through persecution. What's interesting is our writer was one of the recipients of that “loving kindness”. We know this based upon what the very next verse says. As we continue to Hebrew 10:34, **for you had compassion on me in my chains,....**

The first thing you need to recognize is this writer was talking about being in prison. This was part of the narrative in the first century if you were a believer in Yeshua. These Hebrew Christians, these Jewish Christians, what we call today Messianic Jews, their faith is growing, but you know what they were experiencing from the very onslaught? Persecution. That's what they were experiencing. From their own people and also from the Romans.

He's talking about being in chains. He's in chains for the gospel, but then he goes on and says in Hebrews 10:34, **for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven.** (emphasis added) What an amazing example of what a community of the body of Messiah actually looks like.

This is love. This is true love. When you read this, whether you read it in the English or in the Greek, it's very clear **...plundering of your goods,...** In other words, whatever they had they were willing to give for their brother who was suffering and was locked behind bars. But it goes further than that. Take yourself into this historical context, if there was a believer that had been sent to prison for the gospel and you were a believer and testified to the gospel, you're risking your own life by going to him. You may end up with him.

So this is deep, deep love. This is passion. This is a heart, a focus, for the kingdom of God to be able to do this. Yet this is what these brethren are displaying. The other interesting thing I love about this is you discover something about this epistle. It's not just a letter written to this broad range of Hebrews

that he doesn't know. This is very personal. He's had contact, beautiful fellowship, with the people he's writing. Now, obviously, it would extend to all of the Hebrews and then eventually to the Gentiles, like us today. Here we are reading this epistle. But this is a very amazing thing, very intimate, if you will.

As we continue, he's going to give a warning. So we kind of take a turn here. He says, **Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward** (emphasis added, Hebrew 10:35). As we start to peel back the Greek on this, specifically in regard to this word, confidence, it's going to get deeper. This word in the Greek is *παρρησίαν* (*parrēsian*) (*freedom of speech, openness, especially in speech; boldness, confidence.*) You're going to hear this term today. It actually means freedom of speech. Freedom of speech. Something we should be able to identify with in this country. It's a freedom of speech, openness, especially in speech, boldness.

It's interesting because earlier on in Hebrews the translators actually took this very same word, *παρρησίαν* (*parrēsian*), and translated it as boldness. And actually earlier than that, going back to chapter 4, verse 16 **...Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace...** (emphasis added). It's all the same word *παρρησίαν* (*parrēsian*). All the same Greek word.

So, here we see that when you start to put this stuff together, you understand what he's really saying. Keep in mind that this statement, **do not cast away your confidence**, is made in the context of persecution. The writer is worried about them, telling them, don't cast away your boldness for the gospel, where you go out and openly proclaim Yeshua has risen from the grave. That He brings salvation. We need to call upon Him for forgiveness of sins, for salvation. It's imperative to have this boldness.

In other words, the writer is basically telling them do not be intimidated by fear. Do not let fear control you. Rise up to the standard. Now, I'm going to tell you if we've ever needed to hear this message, it is today. Living in the society that we're living in. We need *παρρησίαν* (*parrēsian*). We need this. We need boldness.

I want to give you a living example of this, biblically speaking, where you can see this in action. You actually can see this word being used, this very same Greek word. It's in Acts chapter three. What we see is Peter and John going to the temple at the hour of prayer. They're going to pray, but they come across a man who was born lame from his mother's womb. The people, it doesn't say who, but people have set him there at the gate, so as people go in he can beg for alms. Clearly he can't work. He can't use his legs. So he's begging for alms, while all these Jewish people are going into the temple. He's begging Peter and John to give him alms and Peter says, **"look at us"** (Acts 3:4). They clearly, just from the way they're dressed, don't have any money. But he said **"what I do have, I give to you" In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.** (Acts 3:6). And this guy gets up walking and leaping, instantaneous healing. He grabs his hand, he is instantaneously healed. This didn't happen over an hour or anything like that. Instantaneous. He rises up, walking, leaping and praising the Lord. Amazing! Now this caused quite a stir in the temple. I mean a real stir, to the point where everyone's pressing and looking at Peter and John. Peter's looking at this crowd saying, **"Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?"** (Acts 3: 12) No, no, no. This man walks because of the name of Yeshua, faith in that name. This is why he walks. Peter proclaims the gospel to these people in the temple. He proclaims the resurrection of the Messiah Yeshua. Now, you can't do that when you're in the midst of the chief priests, or when you're in the midst of the Sadducees. These people who make up the Sanhedrin, they

were not going to put up with it. They take Peter and John into custody. They actually have to spend the night in jail. And the next day, they're brought before the Sanhedrin, before the council.

This is where it gets interesting, because Peter is going to testify of the Lord and he says this **"This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.'** [He's quoting Psalm 118.] ¹² **Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved"** (Acts 4:11-12). Now look at the next verse, ¹³ **Now when they saw the boldness (παρρησίαν (parrēsian) It's the same Greek word.) of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled.** This kind of boldness, you would expect from someone who was trained, who was revered, and who was respected. Not Peter and John. They are amazed. They're marveling at their boldness. Boldness of what? Preaching the gospel, preaching Yeshua. This next part is the beautiful text **...And they realized that they had been with Jesus** (emphasis added Acts 4:13).

The council clearly sees something is totally different here. They recognize they've been with Him. This is the ultimate compliment any of us could receive in this life. When someone has an encounter with you and they say, oh, I realize you've been with Yeshua. If there's anything I want anyone to say about me, it's that.

¹⁴ **And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.** (the power of God silenced them) ¹⁵ **But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves,** ¹⁶ **saying, "What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them is evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it.** ¹⁷ **But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name** (emphasis added, Acts 4: 14-17).

This is the birth of the ministry of the gospel, the church is starting to grow, and immediately the spirit of the devil, the spirit of Antichrist comes in and says don't speak in this name. He did not want this name going out because of the power of the name. The devil was coming against it. And so what are they doing in this verse? They're posting threats.

This is persecution. The gospel at the beginning of its birth, it's already getting immersed in persecution. By their own people! The most respected Jews in the nation were the Sanhedrin, the council, the most revered. These were their leaders and they have forbidden Peter and John to speak. So Peter and John leave the council and they go tell their companions what has happened and how they've been threatened. This is the Sanhedrin, you don't disobey the Sanhedrin.

Peter and John tell their companions that they've been threatened by the council and look at how they respond. They lift up their voices, **"Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word,**(emphasis added, Acts 4:29). Boldness - *παρρησίαν (parrēsian)* It's the same Greek word. They want this boldness.

So when we look at the writer of Hebrews saying, **Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward** (emphasis added, Hebrew 10:35), and he's telling us don't cast away your *παρρησίαν (parrēsian)*, this is in the context of the Gospel in the face of persecution. We need this boldness, don't abandon it.

We continue and we read this, **For you have need of endurance**, (another Greek word you need to know, *ὑπομονή (hypomonēs)*, in other words it means perseverance) **so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:** (emphasis added, Hebrew 10:36). You need to persevere. You want to know how important *ὑπομονή (hypomonēs)* is? How important it is that you persevere? It's all about inheriting the kingdom of God. You want to inherit the goal, the promise? You want to have eternal life? There's something you need to possess, to have, to display. *ὑπομονή (hypomonēs)*. You need to have perseverance. You need to have endurance. But then that leads to the question, what is that? What does that mean? Does that mean to just simply derive within my heart a thought, a concept? Where is this? How do I do this?

Well, we're told in the Book of Revelation and it actually defines this term *ὑπομονή (hypomonēs)*. We go to Revelation 14:12 **Here is the patience,...** this is the very same Greek word *ὑπομονή (hypomonēs)*. It's translated endurance in Hebrew 10:36, here it is translated patience or some translations will say perseverance **...of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus** (emphasis added). Those who what? - **keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.**

This is the perseverance, the endurance of the saints. The people that will not stop talking about Yeshua, that proclaim His name, and they will not abandon the commandments of God. They will not compromise them. If you want to enter into the kingdom of God, this is what you need to have, this is what you need to display. You can't cast off your boldness. There's absolutely no room to compromise.

Now, make no mistake about something. If you do this, display endurance, the devil is coming for you. He is coming and I'll prove it to you spiritually. Revelation 12:17, **And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring,** (specifically those who what?) **who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ** (emphasis added).

Now, you may say to yourself I'm not looking for a fight. You don't have to. You don't have to pick this fight, because he's coming to you. He is coming to you. He is coming to war against you. I'm not telling you this so that you have to fear. But that you'd better get armed to the teeth. You had better, in this country, get resolved in your heart to hold steadfast to the name of Yeshua, Jesus. Don't you dare compromise the commandments. Don't let the enemy pick you apart, because he's going to take every weapon in his arsenal and he is going to hurl it at you. He's going to try to get you by temptation. He's going to try to get you through distractions. He's going to try to intimidate you through fear. He's going to try to threaten you, as he did the apostles. He's going to do everything in his power so that you do not endure. I think of those words that Yeshua spoke in Matthew 10:22 and it says, **And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures** (that same Greek word) **to the end will be saved.** In other words, I will walk in the commandments of God. I will not get off that path and I will never stop confessing Yeshua. We're in a battle of a lifetime. This is a war of a lifetime.

We read 2 Timothy 3:12, **Yes, and all who desire to live godly...** (not selfishly, not according to their dictates of their own heart. But according to God's commandments, His righteousness)...**in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution** (emphasis added). They're going to suffer persecution. It doesn't say they might, or possibly, or it could happen sometime in the future. No, if you hold the testimony of Yeshua, you walk in His commandments, you will be persecuted. It could come from your family. Some of you, yourselves, can testify to this. You have actually been persecuted because you sought to live godly in the Messiah Yeshua and your family has not exactly been on board.

Messianic Jews today identify with this, unfortunately, all too well, as they try to tell their parents, I found Jesus, He is the Jewish Messiah. And the response is, you're worse to me than Hitler. This is what's happening to these Messianic Jews.

Yeshua said, ³⁴...I did not come to bring peace but a sword. ³⁵For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother... ³⁶'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.' (Matthew 10:34-36) Why will this be? Because, **all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution** (emphasis added, 2 Timothy 3:12). It's coming.

There's so many things we could talk about, on so many different levels, of where the enemy is going to hit us. At the workplace, you keep quiet and you don't talk about Jesus there. He's not popular. You may suffer persecution. They find out you're a Christian, you may not get that promotion. You may get ostracized and ridiculed by fellow employees.

You may be in a university right now, attending a college somewhere. The students generally do not appreciate Christianity anymore. Faculty certainly doesn't. Not all, but a lot of professors are going to try to destroy it.

I'm telling you right now, be prepared. Persecution is coming. The days of living as a Christian in America without fear of persecution, they're over. We've lived in this wonderful bubble where we can freely go out and worship and we can express our opinion of our faith. We're not there anymore. I want to read to you some examples to show you how far we have gone.

The headline reads, [Regular Christians Are No Longer Welcome in American Culture](#). This is from Time.com. They're no longer welcome in America. Now keep in mind this country was built upon the principles that come out of the Bible. It was built on this, but now we're no longer welcome.

[Regular Christians Are No Longer Welcome in American Culture](#)

By Mary Eberstandt, June 29, 2016 Time.com

Traditional American Christians have long been on the losing end of culture-war contests—on school prayer, same-sex marriage and other issues. But recent events, including the Supreme Court decision overruling Texas' restrictions on abortion clinics and the mandate that employers provide access to contraception, have added to the sense that religious expression is under attack.

Some of the faithful have paid unexpected prices for their beliefs lately: the teacher in New Jersey suspended for giving a student a Bible; the football coach in Washington placed on leave for saying a prayer on the field at the end of a game; the fire chief in Atlanta fired for self-publishing a book defending Christian moral teaching; the Marine court-martialed for posting a Bible verse above her desk; and other examples of the new intolerance.

This is a new thing we're seeing. It wasn't that long ago I was saying persecution is coming. It's here! We need to open our eyes. The article goes on, [Anti-Christian activists hurl smears like "bigot" and "hater" at Americans who hold traditional beliefs about marriage and accuse anti-abortion Christians of waging a supposed "war on women."](#)

Do you know how many stories I can show you like these? Thousands! Let me share with you a couple more. This one comes from the ADF, Alliance Defending Freedom. They're a law firm. We work with them. An amazing organization with great integrity. Their sole focus is to go out and defend

Christianity, defend religious freedom in this country, such as freedoms the Constitution provides for us. We'll look at what they say here. This comes off their page. This is an amazing statement.



Alliance Defending Freedom - Stand Against Persecution in America:

[All across the “land of the free,” religious freedom is being denied.](#) Notice how brilliant of a headline that really is. We are supposed to be the land of the free, yet we're being denied that freedom. The article says this, [In Idaho, ordained ministers Don and Lynn Knapp were threatened by the City of Coeur d’Alene with fines and jail time for declining to officiate same sex weddings at their wedding chapel.](#) They were threatened **by the City**, not by people, not by citizens, but by the City with **fines and jail time**. Think about that. When I say persecution is here, it's quite literally happening. They're hurling threats. If you do not do what we say, if you hold fast to these principles in that Book you're reading, we're coming after you. We're talking jail time. Not just fines. We will throw you in prison. I've said it before, but I've got to admit I'm reading this book now in a way that is frightening. Because when you read about the first century, they were acquainted with prisons and persecutions. Something, for a long time, we've known nothing about. But now, all of a sudden, here they are. We're going to find out who's who now. We're going to find out who really looks like a Christian in the first century. Now the article goes on and this story is really well know, [After cake artist Jack Phillips politely declined a same-sex couple’s request to design a cake to celebrate their wedding, a Colorado civil rights commissioner stated at a hearing in his case that religious freedom is a “despicable piece of rhetoric” that slave owners, Nazis, and Jack used “to hurt others.”](#)(emphasis added).

Do you understand the kind of language that's now being used? You're going to love Jesus, you want to confess Jesus in public and say I need to live by my convictions that are given from the word of God. Then you are a slave owner, you are a Nazi and all you are concerned about is hurting other people. The words in your Bible hurt people. This is the rhetoric. This is the new narrative. Keep that in mind when you're thinking about whether or not persecution is coming. It's already in the narrative. These things are happening. Now get this, continuing on in the article, [He was also ordered to stop “discriminating,” “reeducate” his staff, and file quarterly compliance reports.](#)

You cannot make this up. In other words, the spirit of Antichrist has come out and says, you will comply, Christian, you will comply with my demands or you're going to prison, you're going to be fined. I will put you in such a state of poverty, you won't know up from down. This is the spirit of Antichrist.

This is not a citizen thing. This is boiling over into academia. This is boiling over into the media. This is boiling over into various cities, governments, and the halls of Congress. This is what's going on. Unbelievable. Are you ready? Are you ready for this type of persecution to come to your door? Are you ready at work? When your employer comes and tells you, it's going to be one way or the other, if you don't compromise those values you have, if you don't confess you support the LGBT movement. Though, let me be clear, we love the people. That's why we want to share the gospel with them. But see, the devil wants you to agree with the sin. And if you don't agree with the sin, well then, you may lose your job. Are you ready to do that? Are you ready? Are you going to hold fast, as the writer of Hebrews is concerned about? Are you able to hold your ground? Are you able to lose what the devil wants to tell you is everything? When in reality, the only reason we have any sustenance or any food is because of the Lord. Who are we trusting in? You're going to be tested. It's coming to you. Don't think you can read these stories and it's not coming to you. All of these people were shocked that persecution entered their doorstep. Let's continue in the article, [Five pastors in Houston, Texas, had](#)

[their sermons and personal communications with churchgoers subpoenaed as part of a campaign by the mayor to silence them on important moral issues.](#)

Now this was several years ago. And when I saw this, I was stunned. Now, I get hundreds and hundreds of articles about various things. I sift through them and some things I look at, some things I don't. When I got this one, this was one of the rare ones, it stunned me. That it's gone this far. Now, let's understand the backdrop here. The mayor of Houston is openly gay and she authored this law, this ordinance known as, and you can't make this up, they called it the HERO ordinance, Houston Equal Rights Ordinance. She authored this law and what was included in this law was that if I'm a man and I simply identify as a woman at any particular hour, I can go into churches and use the women's bathroom. I can go into businesses in Houston and use the women's bathroom. I have the absolute right to do this. You have nothing to say, you cannot discriminate against that. This was the ordinance.

One of the coolest things about this story is that the Christians in the area, well-known pastors and religious leaders, created a coalition to go get signatures to repeal this ordinance. It was an awesome display of unity for righteousness. So they do this, but then another circus of conspiracy breaks out saying, well, we got your signatures, but some of these we're not going to accept. So interestingly, they didn't make the cut to repeal. This is fascinating. So they said that's fine. We will file a lawsuit against the mayor and against the city. As they did that, all of a sudden they're magically getting these subpoenas.

Listen to me carefully, when you have cities the size of Houston, well-known, going forth with boldness, if you will, on their part, willing to do this, we're starting to see signs of scary, scary things happening. Actual attacks against the gospel. That is what is happening right now. They'll be called public emergencies and when I say that I'm being serious. The mayor of Houston when she wanted to pass this ordinance, and they did pass it, she did so by reason that she said this was a public emergency. If men feel like a woman at that particular minute, for them to get into these bathrooms, that's a public emergency, apparently. Absolute craziness.

Moving on in the article, [The State of California has ordered pro-life pregnancy centers to promote abortion, and to refer women for abortions, under threat of crippling fines.](#)

Keep in mind. It doesn't say Planned Parenthood, California has ordered Planned Parenthood. I mean, that would be one thing. I still would think it is ridiculous, but they get government funding, whatever. But here, this is pro-life pregnancy centers. Not necessarily funded by the government and they're actually saying, no, you have to send them to the abortion centers. You have to advise them, there needs to be an education that abortion is the answer.

The whole point of pro-life centers is to say it's not the answer, this is a human being. But this is what they're doing. They're willing to do it with crippling fines. And that's just the start. See, that's how Nero did it with the Jews. Did you know that? He started taxing them into oblivion and it's interesting what broke out of that. Some of the worst persecution we've ever read in history. You might want to start looking at the things that are happening in this country, because historically, as we look at things going down this road, our future doesn't look good. For this concept of being able to freely assemble, this concept of willingly holding fast to the commandments of God, you're going to pay a price. You're going to pay a price for it.

Here's an article from American Family Association. Listen to this, because this is not just in governments. Like I said, now this is going to businesses. Here's the headline:

[Target Pushes for U.S. Government to Punish Churches and Christian Business Owners](#)



American Family Association, Tuesday, April 30, 2019, afa.net

This is the Target Corporation. So now you have corporations in this country going forth and being a part of this. You're going to see the dominoes start to fall. You cannot make this stuff up. Here's what the article goes on to say, [Now Target has gone on public record stating they fully and wholeheartedly support the passage of the Equality Act now before Congress, meaning it supports government-sanctioned discrimination against churches and Christian business owners.](#)

In other words, what they're saying is we're going to lose our rights to serve our God freely. This is what's coming and now you've got corporations chiming in. It's just getting ridiculous.

So one thing I mentioned last week, I had to bring the article, just to show you that I'm not making this stuff up when I say this stuff.

[California Lawmakers Pass Resolution Blaming Religious People for High Suicide Rates in the LGBT Community](#)



By, Will Moule, Christian Headlines.com Contributor July 30th, 2019

[Lawmakers in California have passed a resolution](#), (This resolution actually passed. It doesn't necessarily mean that they can enforce it as a law, but they passed the resolution) [that singles out the state's religious communities and forces them to fully support LGBT individuals. In an astonishing bid to have people of faith conform to the pervading progressive culture, the legislators even blamed religious individuals for many of the issues faced by those in the LGBT community today – including suicide, the Federalist reports.](#)

Again, this is what is coming. You are going to be the cause for the world's problems. This is eerily reminiscent of Hitler blaming the Jews for all of Germany's problems. Only now it's going to be all of us. It's coming, I'm telling you right now. This stuff is so blatantly in our face that it's ridiculous. I want to read to you one more. This shows you how broad this persecution is.

[Christian persecution not just happening overseas – many in US targeted for their faith, too.](#)



By, Dr. Kent Ingle, Fox News

[The truth is, persecution is more prevalent and geographically dispersed than any other time in history. Approximately 215 million Christians worldwide experience very high to extreme persecution. Newsweek reported in January 2018 that “the persecution and genocide of Christians across the world is worse today than at any time in history.”](#)


Do you understand? This is what I'm saying, we are in the last minute of the last hour of the last day. This is what I would expect to read in the newspapers if Revelation is correct. If what Yeshua was telling us in Matthew 24 is correct. We're talking about a tribulation that has never been experienced before in the history of mankind. This is what we would expect to be reading in the newspapers. And this is what we're reading. Do we even know what time it is? Do we know where we're at? Are you ready for what is coming?

The things I'm seeing today, I used to only read about. I was pondering about how insane this is. I've read the story of Noah. I've studied how the angels came down and perverted mankind. The heavenly mixing with the earthly. Holy mixing with the profane. Evil spirits being birthed out of that. Teaching mankind all sorts of horrible evils. Men starting to drink blood. All these things I read about. Then you can go to Sodom and Gomorrah. You can read how they were given over to such sexual immorality, such perversion, that God had to come in and destroy them. I've only read about those stories, but now I'm living them. You want to know how close we are to judgment? That's how close we are. We're living in a society that is mirroring the scariest parts of the Bible. What do you do with that?

You get ready. You get armed to the teeth. You get your relationship in order with Yeshua right now. It cannot wait. Today is the day. Today if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts. We need to be firing on all cylinders like the apostles fired. Amen.

The Antichrist is going to push his agenda. We've got Hanukkah coming up and I think of that story. The things that Antiochus Epiphanes and the Seleucid Empire came in and did and started to push upon the Jews and how he approached them are all the things I'm seeing in this country today. It's like I said, if we know our history it gets frightening.

One more article I'll share with you. And with this one I want to show you how bad things really are. How the Antichrist has breached the church. The insanity that we are living in that this could even be possible. I received this not long ago.

[Lesbian Episcopal priest named President of National Abortion Federation - Abortion Providers are Modern Day Saints.](#)  By, Heather Clark, Nov 10, 2019

WASHINGTON – the National Abortion Federation (NAF) has announced that its board has appointed Katherine Hancock Ragsdale, a lesbian Episcopal priest, to serve as its president and CEO. So in other words, you have this Episcopal priest. She's serving the flock of Jesus Christ. The reason people come to church is to hear about Jesus and to hear the truth, so that they can know the Good Shepherd. And here you have this priest taking the helm in the abortion industry, being president and CEO of this particular association, NAF. It gets worse. This is a quote from her. Listen to this, keeping in mind this is a priest. **“Abortion providers are some of my personal heroes and modern – day saints,” she said in a statement. “It is an honor to be able to serve and support NAF members as they provide compassionate health care amid increasing attacks and challenges.”**(emphasis added) What part of ripping a child that's unborn and defenseless limb by limb is compassionate? The atrocities of the murders are unspeakable. I'm not going to discuss it. I can't go there. It makes me sick.

You have someone in the church saying all these abortion providers, Planned Parenthood, are my heroes. They're amazing heroes. Now, if you question on any level that this is the Antichrist, you have problems. This is the spirit, the vile spirit of the Antichrist, the level that he is willing to go to. It's in the church! He wants to get you to willingly compromise. That's what Antiochus Epiphanes tried with the Jews. As he rolled into town, the first attack against them wasn't violence or persecution. No, it was just come on to our side, join us and you'll be blessed. It was very tempered. But then when they refused, well, that didn't go over so well. So they increased the pressure. The spirit of Antichrist is not going to stop until you compromise or you're in jail or dead.

Do you understand what we're up against? What's coming? Peter says this, **Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the**

flesh has ceased from sin, (emphasis added, 1 Peter 4:1). He's really saying the same thing the writer of Hebrews is saying when he says if we willfully sin there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins. He's getting the same point across that if you suffer in the flesh, that's proof you're receiving the same thing that Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:12, **Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution**. Or they won't suffer persecution and they'll go to sin. I mean, this is the reality, **... arm yourselves also with the same mind...**(1 Peter 4:1) You want to make it as a believer, to inherit the kingdom of God? You better get the mind of Christ. And what was His mind? He knew His mission was to be persecuted. He knew His mission was to suffer. Do you have that mind?

Because if you look at a lot of Christians today, they do not have that mindset. We create new theologies like the rapture theory, because we're not going to be suffering. We're not going to be persecuted. It's unbelievable.

James 5:10 says, **My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience**. Righteous men of God did not compromise. But what were they met with? Opposition. Persecution. Prisons and even death. That's what the prophets experienced. But you know what? They had the joy of the Lord. They had the Lord on their side. They didn't care. They were willing. They did not love their lives to the death. They were resolved in their hearts. And they had their eye on the prize.

Philippians 1:29, one of my favorite passages, states, **For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake**. We missed that last part in the gospel message. You don't hear about that. You hear just believe and you're going to be fine. But there's nothing about suffering. There's nothing about you entering into a persecuted family.

One of the things that I make certain of before I baptize anyone is that they know they are entering into a persecuted family. The Jews for centuries, if you wanted to convert to Judaism, conveyed to you you're coming into a persecuted family, don't do this until you recognize that. Their history is filled with persecution.

Our expectation when we accept Jesus as Lord, and we're going to follow him, is suffering. It's not rainbows and butterflies. We're not promised that. Yeshua says, **...“In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”** John 16:33 (emphasis added).

So everything we see now, righteous man after righteous man being persecuted or killed doesn't make us stumble. It makes us stronger. Actually, Paul talks about this in Philippians. In the first chapter, he talks about how his imprisonments have emboldened other believers to be bold for the gospel. This is the effect of persecution with real believers. This is what we signed up for.

Not a whole lot of people hear this anymore. In fact, not that long ago, a couple years ago, they had one of the biggest Christian events in the state's history. Many had come in and confessed Jesus as Lord and then they sealed the deal with a pillow fight. I'm not making that up. I watched it. I couldn't believe it. In my mind, I'm thinking do you have any idea what you're signing up for, what you are agreeing to? Do you have any understanding what Christ did on the cross? Do you have an understanding of what it is that we're trying to obtain by diligence in our obedience to Him and the weight of that? It is mind-blowing what we see happening today.

We read in 1 Thessalonians 3:3, **that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this** (emphasis added). We are not to be shaken. We are not to be moved. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear. We are not going to fear. We need to get ready and you need to be resolved in your heart. You need to be prepared for persecutions that are coming. Expect them. We were told to expect them. This is on us.

In Romans 5:3, we read this, **And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations,...**(emphasis added). That sounds like the words of a madman. We glory in tribulations? Let's just be honest, how many of you, in your history, you looked at all the tribulations you went through and said, I conquered, I gloried. Because I can stand here before you and tell you, I failed. I hate them. I hate the tribulations. I hate some of these things. I tell you, if we have the true love of Yeshua burning in our hearts, the kingdom of God within us, if we're resolved, if we're focused on Yeshua, then we will glory in tribulations. Why? Because tribulations are a refiner.

Look at what the rest of the verse says. Paul goes on and says this **...knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; ⁴and perseverance, character; and character, hope** (Romans 5:3-4). And James says the same thing in his first epistle.

Tribulation does something to us. As believers in Yeshua, it purges all of the impurities out of us. I'm going to tell you that I have suffered over the last couple years with some serious tribulation and I can't tell you how much impurity it has burned off. In that, trust me, I glory in the Lord. I do glory in the Lord. He draws you closer. I have a completely different perspective than I've ever had. I have more clarity and focus in regard to the kingdom of God than I have ever had in my life. It didn't come through rainbows and butterflies. It came from hell. I'm telling you that there's so much truth to this. I can testify to this as my own testimony. In that I glory, in what it has accomplished in me.

Acts 5:40 reads **And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them...** (Sounds like a great time. Here the apostles are, acquainted with beatings, tortures and imprisonments) **...they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. ⁴¹So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name** (emphasis added, Acts 5:40-41). Could you imagine being in the situation they're in? Being beaten for the name of Yeshua? Essentially left for dead? And instead of walking away and saying, okay, where's God in my life? I profess His name and I just get beaten for it? Where is God now? Did the apostles say that? They're doing the exact opposite. They're actually rejoicing. They're rejoicing that they could even be counted worthy to suffer for His name, because they know they're not worthy.

This is a recalibration for us right now. We need total recalibration. We need to get to this place. We need to get to the place of the apostles. And can I ask you a question? After this horrific event and persecution, did they stop preaching the name of Yeshua? With everything that's coming and the devil trying to stick a noose around the gospel, you don't ever stop proclaiming the very salvation that has saved you. We confess the name of Jesus. We confess the name of Yeshua. We will not draw back. Romans 8:36 says **As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." ³⁷Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us** (emphasis added). More than conquerors! The world might look like they've defeated their foe. Yeshua says, **And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell** (emphasis added, Mathew 10:28). You can kill us, but we're going to resurrect. There's going to be a resurrection. Have this resolve in your mind. You need to believe it, so when the moment comes, you do not hesitate, you don't blink, but you are more than

willing to suffer for the name of Yeshua. So if it should so be that He finds you worthy, praise Him that you suffer persecution.

Moving back to Romans 8:18 which states, **For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.** Doesn't even compare to the glory. Recalibrate your mind with this. Whatever you're going through right now, and it could be some serious trials and tribulation, it's nothing compared to the glory that's going to be revealed. Never forget that. This is the truth. This is good news. Amen. This is where we need to be as a flock. Because if you're not ready, you are not going to make it. Persecution is going to be on your doorstep before you know it.

Getting back to Hebrews. We continue in Hebrew 10:37-38 **"For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and will not tarry.** (That's the promise. We're waiting for Him.) ³⁸**Now the just shall live by faith; but if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him."** See, this goes back to Hebrews 10:26. The writer said essentially, if we willfully sin after receiving the knowledge of the truth, if we willfully break His law, His commandments, there's no sacrifice for sins. And here the writer, in a way, seals it off. He quotes the prophet Habakkuk right out of the Septuagint, which says the just shall live by faith. But if you draw back you are a dead man. This is the proverbial dog returning to its vomit. You're going back to your sins. I love what Yeshua says in Luke 9:62, **... "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."** That means going back to your old habits and old ways. You take your hand off the plow, you're a dead man, or a dead woman.

It makes you think about Lot's wife, right? Lot's wife was shown mercy and grace from the wrath of God. Literally taken by angelic beings out of the city. And what did she do? She looked back. Instantaneously God struck her. She was killed. She was not worthy to be safe. She abused that grace. She insulted the spirit of grace. That's what she did. She became a pillar of salt. Absolutely terrifying.

I want to tell you, if your heart's in this world and for the things of this world, you're going to inherit what's coming to this world. That's all there is to it.

A young rich man comes to Yeshua. Actually, before we even get into this, the preceding verses are very helpful. The young man basically asked Yeshua, "What must I do to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven?" Yeshua responds, "Keep the Commandments." The man replies, which ones? Yeshua starts going through the Ten Commandments and the man's response is, I've kept these things from my youth. I've kept them. The young man is looking good.

Then **Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect,...** (What does Yeshua say in Matthew 5? Be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.) **... "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."**(Matthew 19:21). Follow Me. Yeshua said you need to follow Me. **But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions** (Matthew 19:22). You think about that statement. He went away sorrowful. Why was he sorrowful? Because his heart was with his riches. Do you understand something? I'm going to express a concept that's very important, something that we've all heard. People put this up on the walls of their home. Home is where the heart is. I'm going to tell you this, you will always return home. We talked about dogs returning to vomit. If your home, your heart, is with the world, you're going to go home. Home is where the heart is. If your heart is with the world, if your heart is with all your little sins that you keep going back to, you need to be terrified. You wonder why you keep circling back and you keep going back to your sin again and again? Your heart is there. Your heart is in sin. Your

heart cannot be in two different places. You may want to profess, my heart is with Jesus. No, it's not. You need to move your home. You need to get it settled on Yeshua.

And when you love Yeshua and your heart is with Him, that's where you will go. You hear these amazing stories of dogs who have been lost, given away, ran away, been like a hundred miles away from home, only to come all the way back home. I've heard dozens of stories over the years. They tread all these miles, because that's their home. They go to it. You will return to your home. I don't care how you cut it. Wherever your heart is, that is where you are going.

Paul says this powerful statement in 2 Corinthians 7:10, **For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death** (emphasis added). This rich young man is going away sorrowful because he's concerned about his riches. This is death. The sorrow of the world is death, if that's what you're going after.

Now, I challenge every one of you to go home tonight and whatever idol is set up in your heart that is higher than the Lord, maybe it's TV or you like to watch certain movies. When the Holy Spirit starts prodding you and says you need to stop watching those certain movies, if your heart is broken and you're sorrowful that you have to turn away from that, then you're in trouble. Your heart is not with the Lord. Your heart is with your idols. This is terrible. We don't want to admit this stuff. We want to live in la-la land until the Judgment Day. That doesn't work. That's not going to work out well for any of us, me included. We've got to get our heart in the right place. That's where we need to be.

Finishing off with the last verse in Hebrews 10:39, **But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.** I love that he ends this on a high note saying, we will not compromise! We will not be compliant to the enemy's demands. We will not go back to temptation. We will not go back to our sins. Our heart is with Yeshua! That's my home. I'm going home. Amen.