Please pray for those who suffer for the sake of Christ worldwide.

“Responding to Persecution”

Matthew 5:10-12
The Spiritual Root of Persecution

"If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first" (John 15:18).

Clarified: “For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another” (Galatians 5:16).
Applied to Humanity Socially...

“For man is born for trouble, as sparks fly upward” (Job 5:7).

* Murder
* Sexual immorality
* Hate
* Racism
World-Wide Persecution

100,000 Christians (eleven per hour) have been killed on average every year of the past decade (www.denisonforum.org). Christians = 30% world population; 80% all religious discrimination

75,000,000 Christian martyrs since Jesus; 45,000,000 in the last century alone (more than all other centuries combined).
Blessed = Righteousness Sake
Matthew 5:10-11

“Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.”
What persecution is NOT

Not hardships in life (John 16:33)
Not illness or aging complications

Persecution **is** the world’s hostile response; directly the result of your relationship with Jesus.

(Kelvin Cochran, former ATL fire chief)
1. The Lord Comforts His Afflicted

Knowledge of His presence:
“The LORD is near to the brokenhearted
And saves those who are crushed in spirit”
(Psalm 34:18).

Our Moral / Spiritual Victory Is At Hand:
“...greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world”
(1 John 4:4).
2. The Fires of Suffering “Purify.”

“"But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap” (Malachi 3:2).

Pain brings focus.

Pain surfaces true issues of life; life and death into focus. What really matters.
3. Focus on Hope (Romans 8:18ff).

How to find hope in suffering

Vs. 18 – sufferings not worthy to be compared;

Vs. 26 – Spirit intercedes with deep groanings

Vss. 37-39 – Nothing can separate you from love of Christ
Keep Eyes on Jesus!
Hebrews 12:1-3

What should we do?
* Consider Jesus – endured b/c the joy set before Him!

Result: run the race set before us
Result: do not grow weary
Result: do not lose heart
Pray.

1. “Deliver us from evil” (Mt. 6:13).


3. “Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you.” (Mt. 5:44).