

Theme: As Christian, persecution is an ever present reality that we must fight through prayer and action.

I. Intro – DVD clip

- A. Intro to clip
- B. Clip of Hmong Christians
- C. Persecution is reality
- D. What does Bible teach?
- E. What should we do?

II. A Biblical Theology of Persecution

- A. Persecution is an expected part of Christianity
 - 1. Scripture (2 Tim 3:12; Jn 15:18-20; 1 Pet 4:12-13)
 - a. 2 Timothy 3:12
 - b. John 15:18-20
 - c. 1 Peter 4:12-13
 - d. Consistent teaching in NT
 - 2. The principle of suffering & glory
 - a. Luke 24:25-26 – suffering then glory
 - b. Psalms – Lamentation to praise
- B. Christians work to stop evil of persecution

- 1. Prov 24:11-12
- 2. Psalm 82:4
- 3. Isaiah 58:6

III. Examples of Persecution and Response

- A. Examples of persecution
 - 1. Laments in the Psalms – Psalm 10:8-11
 - 2. Prophets
 - 3. Hebrews 11:32-38
 - 4. Stephen & apostles
 - 5. Modern persecutions (map)
- B. Examples of godly responses
 - 1. Obadiah – 1 Kings 18:4
 - 2. Damascene believers - Acts 9:23-25
 - 3. Believers in history

IV. What We Can Do Today

- A. Learn
 - 1. Look at board, check out videos
 - 2. ICC, PP, VOM newsletters

3. Email updates

4. Don't turn away – pay attention!

B. Pray

1. Hebrews 13:3 – Pray with empathy

2. 2 Thessalonians 3:1-3 – Word, deliver, faithful

C. Act

1. Prov 24:11-12 – learn, pray lead to action

2. Write letters – chances on board

3. Give money to ICC, PP, VOM

The Communion of Saints Under Fire

2 Timothy 3:12

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Response: Congregational Prayer

Benediction: 2 Corinthians 13:14

18 “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. 19 If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, **you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.** 20 Remember the words I spoke to you: ‘No servant is greater than his master.’ **If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also.** If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.
John 15:18-20

12 Dear friends, **do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you.** 13 But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.
1 Peter 4:12-13

25 He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Did not the Christ **have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?**”
Luke 24:25-26

11 **Rescue** those being led away to death; **hold back** those staggering toward slaughter. 12 If you say, “But we knew nothing about this,” does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who guards your life know it? Will he not repay each person according to what he has **done?**
Proverbs 24:11-12

4 **Rescue** the weak and needy; **deliver them** from the hand of the wicked.
Psalm 82:4

6 “Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to **loose** the chains of injustice and **untie** the cords of the yoke, to **set the oppressed free** and **break every yoke?**
Isaiah 58:6

8 He lies in wait near the villages; **from ambush he murders the innocent,** watching in secret for his victims. 9 He lies in wait like a lion in cover; **he lies in wait to catch the helpless; he catches the helpless and drags them off in his net. 10 His victims are crushed, they collapse; they fall under his strength.** 11 He says to himself, “God has forgotten; he covers his face and never sees.”
Psalm 10:8-11

32 And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets, 33 who through

faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. 35 Women received back their dead, raised to life again. **Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection. 36 Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. 37 They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated— 38 the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.**
Hebrews 11:32-38

4 While Jezebel was killing off the LORD’s prophets, Obadiah had taken a hundred prophets and hidden them in two caves, fifty in each, and had supplied them with food and water.
1 Kings 18:4

23 After many days had gone by, the Jews conspired to kill him, 24 but Saul learned of their plan. Day and night they kept close watch on the city gates in order to kill him. 25 **But his followers took him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall.**
Acts 9:23-25

3 **Remember** those in prison **as if** you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated **as if** you yourselves were suffering.
Hebrews 13:3

1 Finally, brothers, **pray** for us **that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored,** just as it was with you. 2 And **pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men,** for not everyone has faith. 3 But **the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you** from the evil one.
2 Thessalonians 3:1-3

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Proverbs 24:11-12