

## ***When In Persecution's Flame***

***John 15:18-25 & 16:1-4a***

Today, in much of the world, being Christian means, at best, losing your \_\_\_\_\_ and being rejected by your \_\_\_\_\_. At worst, it means imprisonment, beating, and \_\_\_\_\_. If we experience this, we shouldn't be surprised. Jesus Himself warned of coming persecution of believers. The reason is simple: the world is in \_\_\_\_\_ against God, hates God, and when He came as the man, Jesus Christ, it responded by \_\_\_\_\_ him. Jesus promised us that the world would treat us the way it treated him.

In this world, the more we conform to the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ rather than the \_\_\_\_\_ of the world, the more we are likely to experience harsher forms of persecution. So, we tend to keep our faith behind the closed doors of our \_\_\_\_\_ and, out there, go along to get along. But God calls us to seek to be transformed into the image of Christ. And such a transformation \_\_\_\_\_ persecution.

We think it best if God shielded His people from persecution because allowing it would \_\_\_\_\_ people \_\_\_\_\_. All over the world, Christianity is \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ far more significantly where persecution is present.

God's word doesn't just teach pressures and troubles are to be \_\_\_\_\_. It is these that produce what we need most...being \_\_\_\_\_.

You may think that in persecution's flame you will \_\_\_\_\_. But as one man who spent years in a Siberian Gulag said of his experience of living through persecutions flame, "I found that God \_\_\_\_\_, exactly as Jesus has promised."

Paul knew this. He wrote of knowing Christ through \_\_\_\_\_ in His \_\_\_\_\_. There is a unique \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ with Jesus in suffering for Him.

Follow Jesus. Follow Him closely. Don't be \_\_\_\_\_ about it even when the path leads through the fire. He will \_\_\_\_\_.