

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 _____.