

# Moments for YOU

Volume 53, Number 3

Theme: Persecution



*This issue of “Moments For You” is dedicated to all of the followers of Jesus Christ, past and present, who have been persecuted for their faith. If you are suffering for Christ’s sake, we trust these few short articles will be an encouragement to you. If not, may we each be given grace to faithfully represent Christ, and to consider it joy when we suffer for Him.*

## CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST

*Richard Wurmbbrand, the author of this article, was imprisoned for a total of 14 years for doing Christian work in communist Romania. He later founded “The Voice of the Martyrs,” a ministry which supports persecuted believers.*

Suppose you were living 2,000 years ago in Palestine, that you were sinful, heavy with guilt, and Jesus told you, “Your sin is grave and deserves punishment. But tomorrow I will be flogged and crowned with a crown of thorns. They will drive nails into My hands and My feet and fix Me to a cross. And when I have died, you shall know that your sins are forgiven forever, that I was your substitute, your scapegoat. Will you accept My suffering for your offense, or do you prefer to bear the punishment yourself?”

Would you accept? In my prison cell Jesus put before me the problem I have just put to you. Then came the real question, the thing He had in mind from the beginning. “What if I incorporate you into My body, if you deny yourself as an independent self, and I will live in you henceforth and you will be ‘crucified with Me’ (Galatians 2:20), ‘buried with Me’ (Romans 6:4), and share the fellowship of My suffering (Philippians 3:10)?”

I have accepted this proposal. Christians are meant to have the same vocation as their King, that of cross-bearers. It is this consciousness of a high calling and of partnership

with Jesus which brings gladness in tribulation, and makes Christians enter prisons for their faith with joy.

A person who smugly accepts Christ’s dying for him and shouts “hallelujah” about the innocent Son of God receiving punishment he himself deserves is hardly a follower of Christ. Because sacrifice is implicit in a conversion, the call of an evangelist has the name “altar call.” Every being placed upon the altar in Jerusalem—lamb, ram, and pigeons—died. Someone died for you. This time it is not an animal, but the Son of God. He has decreed it and nothing you can do will change His mind. You can only accept it in faith and ask for the privilege of henceforth being able to sacrifice yourself as well, for the glory of God (Romans 12:1).

—Adapted from *100 Prison Meditations*.

## PERSECUTION’S PRIVILEGE

*“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake” (Philippians 1:29).*

What a tremendous privilege it is to have forgiveness of sin and eternal life by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ as one’s Saviour. Once a person is brought to see that he is a sinner and deserving of God’s condemnation, he can understand his need of receiving Christ as Saviour. Then, upon transferring his trust from himself and what he can do to Jesus Christ and what He has done for him, a person becomes a

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child of God and is delivered from condemnation (see John 1:12; 5:24).

Then notice the other privilege that Paul mentioned in Philippians 1:29, “But also to suffer for His sake.” Suffering for evil is not a privilege, but it is a privilege to suffer in behalf of the Lord Jesus Christ. A person guilty of a crime suffers at the hands of others because of his wrongdoing, but when an innocent believer suffers for his or her faith in Christ, this is a distinct privilege (see 1 Peter 2:19,20).

When believers realize that suffering in the behalf of Christ is a part of their Christianity, they will not be startled, or terrified, when it comes.

—From *Gems From the Original, Volume III*, by Harold J. Berry.

## THE SECRET OF SUFFERING

*“For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day” (2 Timothy 1:11,12).*

Paul was in prison and what was his crime? Simply that he had preached the wonderful tidings of God’s free offer of life and immortality through Christ. But instead of responding with joy, the world heaped shame and suffering and imprisonment upon the apostle and later killed him.

Dear fellow believer, let us not be deceived about the world. Its true character of enmity to God is clearly seen in its treatment of the apostle. It prefers its path of sin and Satan’s power before God’s glorious gospel. If the awful persecution of Christians that is going on in some parts of the world today has not spread worldwide, it is because God in His sovereign goodness is holding Satan’s power in check.

Have you learned the secret of suffering as Paul did? By faith, he looked forward with confidence. He committed everything into the Lord’s hands, and was not ashamed to suffer because he knew what the final outcome would be. It was not a doctrine that Paul had but a person. “I know *whom* I have believed”—the Person. Do you know Him? True Christianity is not a system of doctrines as other religions, but it is an intimate acquaintance with a Person—and what a glorious Person—One higher than all, who yet gave Himself for us. To know Him, and to commit all into His hands, is the secret of a happy life, however much one may suffer in outward circumstances or be mistreated by a world that hates Christ.

—Condensed from *Readings & Meditations on Second Timothy* by E.C. Hadley.

## BOOK OF MARTYRS

*Here are a few names of Christian martyrs. There are hundreds and even thousands of unnamed others who lost their lives at the same time as those listed here. Though their names are unknown to us, they are well known to God (2 Cor. 6:9).*

<b>Name—means of death</b>	<b>Year</b>
Stephen—stoned	34
James the Great—beheaded	44
Philip—crucified and stoned	54
Matthew—beheaded	60
James the Less—stoned, beaten	63
Mark—dragged	64
Peter—crucified upside down	69
Paul—beheaded	69
Matthias—stoned	70
Andrew—crucified	70
Thaddaeus—arrows or javelin	70
Bartholomew—flayed, crucified	70
Thomas—speared	70
Simon the Zealot—sawn in half	74
Luke—hanged	93

## BLESSED ARE YE

*“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:10).*

This must have been a strange saying to those who were looking for immediate glory, or a reign of peace. But the Lord plainly sets before His disciples what their position in this world will be: that the more distinct their likeness to Himself, the heavier their persecutions will become.

A Christian who is walking with the Lord seeks to maintain a conscience void of offense towards God and towards man. For example, in his career he may be offered an advancement if he will agree to do something which is not right. The offer may be a tempting one, but he refuses. Righteousness prevails, but he suffers for it. He is misunderstood, is called foolish, and may even lose his job. Still he can confidently say, “My present loss, under the righteous government of God, will prove to be my eternal gain.” He has a clear conscience and a happy heart; he is drawn closer to the Lord in dependence on Him. Are there not many similar areas of daily life with varying degrees of right and wrong? Measure them all by a righteous standard, and seek to do the whole will of God in all things.

When the King returns from the far country, and calls His own servants around Him, what will it be to hear Him say, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord” (Matthew 25:21).

*“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake” (Matthew 5:11).*

Observe that this promise is directly personal. “Blessed are ye.” Jesus is looking at the disciples around Him, and knowing what they would have to pass through, He speaks directly to their hearts. He makes them feel His personal interest in them, and their personal nearness to Himself.

Suffering for Christ’s sake is the result of speaking about Him to others. Not merely a decided “no” when we are asked or enticed to do what is wrong, but an earnest heart that watches for every opportunity to speak about the blessed Lord and salvation. You may speak of religion in a general way, of preachers, of churches, of missions, of societies for doing good, and still be popular; but speak of the Lord Himself, of His precious blood, of the full assurance of salvation, of oneness with Him in heaven, of separation from the world, and you will greatly reduce the number of your friends.

Be prepared for this: as far as the enemy can gain power over you, you will be reviled and persecuted for His name’s sake. It may be nothing more than cold rejection or a contemptuous sneer, but all of this was anticipated by the blessed Lord and graciously provided for. He thinks of everything. Believers are never dearer to His heart than when they are despised and suffering for His sake. “Blessed are ye” is His own sweet word of comfort to their hearts. Further, He tells them to *“Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven” (Matthew 5:12).*

—Condensed from *Meditations on the Beatitudes* by Andrew Miller.

*If you try to imitate Christ, the world will praise you; if you become Christlike it will hate you.*

—D.M. Lloyd-Jones

*If I am told that I am to take a journey that is a dangerous trip, every jolt along the way will remind me that I am on the right road.*  
—F.B. Meyer

## APPOINTED AFFLICTIONS

*“No man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto” (1 Thessalonians 3:3).*

The people Paul wrote these words to had turned from idolatry to the Lord. They were surrounded by bitter enemies, yet they surrendered their lives to the Lord and bore a bright testimony for Him.

How many people today who become Christians wonder if perhaps they have made a mistake when trouble and sorrow come upon them. But hear the words of the apostle: “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12). Our Lord Jesus said to His disciples, “If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you,” and “These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 15:20; 16:33). Elsewhere Paul tells us we must pass through much tribulation to enter into the kingdom of God (Acts 14:22).

Do not be discouraged, dear suffering Christians; do not question your Father’s love because you are passing through sorrows, or have to face disappointing circumstances. The Apostle Peter says, “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:7).

—From 1&2 Thessalonians by H.A. Ironside.

Ignatius— <i>torn by lions</i>	107
Polycarp— <i>stabbed</i>	155
The Romans had threatened Polycarp with beasts and with fire, but nothing would make him turn against Christ. They lit the pyre, which sprang up quickly. But even the fire wouldn’t touch him as it formed an arch around Polycarp’s body. In the end, the Romans commanded an executioner to stab him. A great quantity of blood put out the remaining flames.	
Justin Martyr— <i>beheaded</i>	165
Origen— <i>tortured</i>	254
Cyprian— <i>beheaded</i>	258
Theban Legion— <i>put to the sword</i>	286
This legion of 6,600 soldiers from Thebes declined the Roman emperor’s order to help exterminate their fellow-Christians. Their statement when told they would be killed: “We have arms in our hands but do not resist, because we would rather die innocent than live by any sin.”	
Alban— <i>beheaded</i>	304
Sebastian Soldiers— <i>frozen</i>	320
Telemachus— <i>gladiator’s sword</i>	404
Boniface— <i>ambushed</i>	755
Alphage— <i>bludgeoned</i>	1012
Bishop Gellert— <i>stabbed</i>	1046
William Swinburn— <i>burned</i>	1401
Jan Hus— <i>burned</i>	1415
Jerome of Prague— <i>burned</i>	1416
John Oldcastle— <i>hanged/burned</i>	1417
Catherine Saube— <i>burned</i>	1417
Henry Voes— <i>burned</i>	1523
Patrick Hamilton— <i>burned</i>	1527
George Wagner— <i>burned</i>	1527
John Frith— <i>burned</i>	1533
William Tyndale— <i>burned</i>	1536
Tyndale was condemned to death for translating the Bible into English. As he was secured to the stake, surrounded by brush and logs, he was heard to say, “Lord, open the King of England’s eyes.” Three years after his death, all printers and sellers of books were ordered by the king to provide for the “free and liberal use of the Bible in our own material and English tongue.”	
George Wishart— <i>burned</i>	1546
Lady Jane Grey— <i>beheaded</i>	1554
Hugh Latimer— <i>burned</i>	1555
Petrus Ramus— <i>mutilated</i>	1572

## MARKS OF THE KING

*“I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38,39).*

The experience of the love of Christ in tribulation or distress puts a very distinctive impression of Him upon the heart. I have a blank sovereign (British coin) which has never been minted; it is gold, but it does not bear the features of the king. It needs pressure to stamp the king’s image there. I believe that the time of trial is the time when a distinctive impression of Christ and His love is put upon the believer. We more than conquer when the pressure of persecution results in the features of Christ appearing distinctively in us.

—From *An Outline of the Epistle to the Romans* by C.A. Coates.

## FAITH AND SUFFERING

*“Of whom the world was not worthy” (Hebrews 11:38).*

Faith accomplishes marvellous deliverances. The mouths of lions can do no injury to believing Daniel, for God sent His angel to shut the lions’ mouths. The violence of fire, heated seven times furiously, is made of no effect by faith; the fourth man was with them because they believed. Others escaped the edge of the sword, as David escaped Saul’s wrath, and Elijah that of Jezebel.

But faith not only has great works and great victories, it also has great trials, sufferings, and painful deaths. Hoping for a better resurrection, faithful Israelites in the times of the Maccabees endured agonizing tortures; others in faith endured stripes, imprisonments, protracted hardship, destitution, hunger and nakedness, constant suffering and dying. Some, like Zechariah, were stoned; others, as tradition says of Isaiah, were sawn asunder; others, like the prophets in the days of Jezebel, were put to death

by the sword. And all lived and suffered by faith, looking forward unto the promises they were assured of, including “a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Hebrews 11:10).

Let us learn from these bright examples. Faith works and suffers; faith is busy and energetic. It is our only strength and victory. In suffering we glorify God as well as in action; and in suffering it is only faith which grasps the promises and rests on the bosom of God in quiet and loving humility. Suffering is an honor God puts on His saints. To us it is given to suffer for Christ’s sake. Let persecuted believers not doubt that they are precious in God’s sight. They are the God-chosen nobility, of whom the world is not worthy.

—Condensed from *The Epistle to the Hebrews* by Adolph Saphir.

*However great the persecution, to have God’s presence in it is far more than compensation for it.*  
—L.M. Grant

## PREPARING FOR THE TEST

*Persecution is promised to every believer. How can we be prepared for it?*

**1. Start small.** Learn to bear with patience a reproach for Christ, and then you will be fitter to bear an iron chain. (Acts 5:41; 2 Timothy 2:3)

**2. Deepen your knowledge of Christ.** A man will never die for one he does not know. (2 Timothy 1:12; 1 Peter 2:7)

**3. Treasure God's truth.** He who does not prize truth above life will never lay down his life for the truth. (Proverbs 23:23; John 8:32)

**4. Learn to deny yourself.** Self-denial is the foundation of godliness, and prepares the believer for adversity. (Luke 9:23; Matthew 19:24-29)

**5. Stand in faith.** Faith unites the soul to Christ and gets strength from God's promises. (Ephesians 6:16; 1 Peter 1:7; 1 Corinthians 16:13)

**6. Walk in Love.** Love thinks it can never do enough for Christ, and motivates every true service for Him. (1 Corinthians 13:3; John 15:13)

**7. Live in Hope.** God's promises assure us of His help, grace, and blessing. (Luke 21:16-19; 2 Cor. 4:17)

—Adapted from *The Beatitudes* by Thomas Watson.

*Persecution is necessary for the godly. If we have not all manner of evil spoken of us, how can we know whether we seek only that honor which comes from above? If we have no persecutors, how can many Christian precepts be put into practice? How can we love, pray for, and do good to those who despitely use us? How can we overcome evil with good? In short, how can we know we love God better than life itself?*

—George Whitefield

### Nagasaki Martyrs—*crucified* 1597

Twenty-six Christian men, nineteen of them Japanese, were arrested. Following a month-long winter march, the men were crucified. It is said that when the column of prisoners saw their crosses, they each embraced theirs, and one of the condemned asked that his hands be nailed to the crossbar. For the rest, chains and iron straps kept the men suspended until a squad of executioners finished the work by pushing spears into their chests.

### Mary Dyer—*hanged* 1660

### James Guthrie—*hanged* 1661

### Richard Cameron—*beheaded* 1680

### John Paton—*hanged* 1684

### John Williams—*speared/eaten* 1839

### Theophane Venard—*beheaded* 1861

### Robert Thomas—*shot* 1865

Thomas was on a mission to smuggle Bibles into Korea. He was caught and died offering a Bible to the soldier who killed him. The soldier wallpapered his house with the Bible, and his nephew was converted and became a pastor.

### Namugongo Martyrs—*burned* 1886

### Lizzie Atwater—*hacked by swords* 1900

### James Chalmers—*clubbed* 1901

### Chrysostomos—*tortured/shot* 1922

### John & Betty Stam—*beheaded* 1934

### Dietrich Bonhoeffer—*hanged* 1945

Bonhoeffer returned to Nazi Germany to preach, and continued to preach and write even after imprisoned. He was hanged at the direct order of Hitler.

### Jim Elliot—*speared* 1956

### Paul Carlson—*shot* 1964

### Wang Zhiming—*public execution* 1973

### Chet Bitterman—*shot* 1981

### Yona Kanamuzeyi—*shot* 1994

### Antonio Revas—*shot* 1998

### Graham Staines—*burned* 1999

Staines was conducting an open-air evangelistic camp. His sons (ages 7 and 9) were with him. After Graham and the boys had retired for the night in their station wagon, a group of militant Hindus attacked them with clubs and set fire to the vehicle. Trapped inside his car by the mob, the missionary died holding his boys.

—Information taken from Foxe: *Voices of the Martyrs*, published by Bridge-Logos Alachua, FL 32615.

## REMEMBER AND PRAY

*“Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body” (Hebrews 13:3).*

If there is lethargy, indifference, or just ignorance about the problem of Christian martyrs, things can and must be changed. But what can we as Christians do?

During the fifth persecution of the early church, certain governing authorities were determined to destroy the church. To achieve the goal, Herod Agrippa decided to eliminate some of the church leaders. James, the brother of John, was executed, and the apostle Peter was incarcerated. What did Peter’s fellow believers do? Acts 12:5 tells us: “Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.” The consequence of this prayer vigil was the miraculous deliverance of the apostle. The Lord heard and answered!

It is most unfortunate that many of our prayer meetings have become halfhearted and superficial. Often

the requests raised have little to do with the truly heartfelt needs of the brethren, and even when they do, we seldom back up our prayers with the genuine passion and concern they deserve. Why don’t we make a concerted effort to pray—as did Peter’s companions—for the deliverance, safety, and intervention of God for suffering fellow believers outside the immediate circle of our fellowship?

In order to pray efficiently and effectively, it is necessary for us to devote time and effort to learning the facts about what’s happening to believers in other countries and cultures. Because Christian persecution is not something we see on the news channels nightly does not diminish the importance of our brethren’s suffering. Don’t expect the world to share your compassion and concern: most people have neither the capacity nor desire to do so. And don’t be deterred because of a lack of information. The information is available; you’ll just have to dig to get it.

—Condensed from *Persecuted: Exposing the Growing Intolerance Toward Christianity* by Elwood McQuaid. Published by Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, OR 97402.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

*For up-to-date information on the persecuted church, we encourage you to contact the following ministries:*

**The Voice of the Martyrs**  
P.O. Box 443  
Bartlesville, OK 74005-0443  
[www.persecution.com](http://www.persecution.com)

**International Christian Concern**  
2020 Pennsylvania Ave NW #941  
Washington, DC 20006-1846  
[www.persecution.org](http://www.persecution.org)

