

November 4, 2018

Fresh Oil: Persecuted Church

Today is the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church. Our brothers and sisters need our prayers. Prayer booklet pg. 12 Monday's prayer for the persecuted church.

Why would some Christians risk being tortured, beaten, raped, harassed, intimidated, losing everything including their life just to go to church and at the same time other Christians don't even care enough to get out of bed? The Christians who are being persecuted realize they need Jesus everyday to survive. They have made the choice not to deny Christ even if it costs them their life. The persecuted Christian "presses in" to make it to church every Sunday because at church they find hope, love, faith, peace and the power-anointing to keep going. In doing so they are developing the character of Christ. In America too many Christians are self-reliant and in their selfishness put little or no value in going to church, ignoring the commandment from Jesus to love one another and assemble together honoring His Sabbath. Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath to those who honor His Sabbath. Satan's #1 goal is to destroy relationships, separate people from one another and ultimately from God. Satan persecutes marriage, family and the Church. One of Satan's main ploys is to take control of the Sabbath and force the Church out. **The "Sabbath" isn't just a "day" of the week. It is God's covenant-covering and equipping for His people.**

Satan is forcing us out of the Sabbath, through lies, manipulation and tribulation-persecution:

Get people too busy, stressed and tired to go to Church; "It's my only day to sleep in and rest."

Criticize pastors and organized religion; "There are no good churches in this area to go to."

Get people offended with the Pastor or someone at church or even God causing them to leave.

Selfishness; "This is **my day** to golf, vacation, fish, shop, watch football, travel, relax..."

Sports for Children; The schools and culture use to respect Sunday, **but since it is no longer a priority to the parents**, the schools and culture is more than happy to "push the Church out" and take over. The culture and your kids will manipulate you with guilt saying "You are hurting your child and the team if you don't let them play."

Family events; our family manipulates us "You love that church more than us!" and calls us "fanatics."

Big lie; "Don't force your kids to go and let them grow up and choose for themselves." Bible; train up your child.

Remember: those who need, love and obey Jesus will "press in" and go through Hell to be at church.

Matt 13:20-22 *But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; 21 yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when **tribulation** or **persecution** arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles (becomes offended).*

Persecution: affliction, oppression, torment, harassment, hostility and ill-treatment especially because of race, political or religious beliefs.

Tribulation: pressure, oppression, stress, anguish, crushing, squashing, squeezing. The word is used of crushing grapes or olives in a press.

Acts 8:1-2 *At that time a **great persecution** arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. 2 And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.*

This is the first official persecution of the Church and it drove the Christians out of Jerusalem and they preached the gospel everywhere they went with great power and authority. Faithful Christians demonstrate this power.

There is only one Church; not a persecuted church and a non-persecuted church

John 16:33 *These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world **you will have tribulation**; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."* Now is the time to be "in Christ" and learn how to press in and overcome gathering fresh oil by entering the covenant-covering and equipping of the Sabbath.

John 15:18,20 *"If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you...20 Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you."*

Luke 6:40 *A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher.*

Are you still willing to be "perfectly trained" and be like Jesus?

Life Song Church: Teaching Answers for Life!