

Persecution & Suffering for Christ's Sake... Romans 8:14-25

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Romans 8:14-25

¹⁴For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are children of God. ¹⁵For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received **the Spirit of Adoption** by whom we cry out, **“Abba, Father.”** ¹⁶The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, **if indeed we suffer with Him**, that we may also be glorified together.

¹⁸For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. ¹⁹For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; ²¹because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.²²For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. ²³Not only that, but we also who have the **firstfruits** of the Spirit, even we ourselves **groan** within ourselves, **eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.** ²⁴For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not see, **we eagerly wait for it with PERSEVERANCE.**

Why does God tell us about Suffering, now the His Holy Spirit is in control of us?
Why does God show us that, we must have a Cooperative Alliance with His Spirit in Suffering with Christ → notice the IF → ¹⁷and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, **if indeed we suffer with Him**, that we may also be glorified together.

Why ... I thought it was going to be a Disney World experience with Rainbows, lollipops, flowers, butterflies, and sunshine ... after I came to Christ. Why is God mentioning a cooperative suffering → I must chose to Suffer with Christ ... for His Name's Sake in order to be glorified with Him in heaven?

Well, let's look at some Bible passages that might help us.

Acts 14:22: through **many tribulations** we must enter the kingdom of God.

2 Timothy 3:12 → In fact, all those who **want** to live a godly life in Christ Jesus **WILL BE PERSECUTED.**

Matthew 5:10-16

¹⁰Blessed are those who are persecuted for **righteousness' sake**,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹"Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. ¹²Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

¹³"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt **loses its flavor**, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

¹⁴"**You are the light of the world.** A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.¹⁵ Nor do they light a lamp and **put it under a basket**, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. ¹⁶Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Notice how our Master, our Precious Savior and LORD ties being Persecuted with being Salt and LIGHT → NOT Keeping Silent. We are **NOT** to just keep silent, be quiet, and stay in our homes and never talk to anyone about God, Jesus Christ, the Bible, sin, etc... we are to be out there and Talk ... shine the LIGHT ... and this will cause Persecution, it will cause Tribulation ... there will be a Backlash... again I am not saying that we need to be belligerent, arrogant, screaming and yelling, etc... we are told to be gentle and respectful ... and **NOT** Silent, either (1 Peter 3:15)

When Jesus says for us **NOT** to fear people killing us ... it is **NOT** that they want to Kill us because we nicey nice and never rock the boat. It is **NOT** because we do nice things and "love" people ... it is because we are called to Share our Faith with others and **NOT BE SILENT** ... or allow ourselves to be **SILENCED** by their Intimidations. If you think you are to **NOT** talk ... think again ... Jesus Christ told us to Shout it from the Roof Tops ... does that sound like Jesus wants us **ever** to be silent?

Jesus said, "**What I tell you in the dark, speak in the light. What you hear in a whisper, proclaim on the housetops.**" Mathew 10:27

Again, does that sound like God is calling us to be SILENT?

After instructing His 12 Disciples about going around to various Villages Proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom ... remember they were talking to people... sharing God's Word that Jesus taught them to tell others ... it

was not developing a soup kitchen or going around and mowing peoples' lawns, etc.... it was proclaiming, teaching, preaching, sharing God's Word

Matthew 10:26-39

²⁶“Therefore, don't be afraid of them, since there is nothing covered that won't be uncovered and nothing hidden that won't be made known. ²⁷What I tell you in the dark, speak in the light. What you hear in a whisper, proclaim on the housetops. ²⁸Don't fear those who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul; rather, fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹Aren't two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father's consent. ³⁰But even the hairs of your head have all been counted. ³¹So don't be afraid therefore; you are worth more than many sparrows.

³²“Therefore, everyone who will acknowledge Me before men, I will also acknowledge him before My Father in heaven. ³³But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father in heaven. ³⁴Don't assume that I came to bring peace on the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵For I came to turn a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; ³⁶and a man's enemies will be the members of his household.

³⁷The person who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; the person who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. ³⁸And whoever doesn't take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me. ³⁹Anyone finding his life will lose it, and anyone losing his life because of Me will find it.

Jesus is very clear here... there is a **Mission**, the Great Commission of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to **spread the Word of God** ... and we will encounter tribulation, **back-lash**, **push-back** and persecution. If your goal in life is to be friends with everyone, get along with everyone, never rock the boat, be at peace with everyone no matter the cost or compromise ... then Christ says you **aren't even worthy** to be His disciple. If you are seeking to FIND your life here on earth and to be pleasing to everyone around you... then you are following the wrong Jesus Christ. Notice how Christ said for us to NOT fear those who want to kill us. That will never happen if we just stay silent and never share God's Word. Again, if your Mission and Goal in life is to ONLY Please Jesus Christ, then you will NOT stay Silent and you WILL Share God's Word and you WILL stand up and Stand up for God's Holy Word and His Ways (in a loving, gentle, and kind way – see 1 Peter 3:15) But, people will still want to kill you if they had a chance. Murder is already in their hearts. They hate God, therefore they will hate us, because we are His children.

The Only Reason Persecution Occurs against Christians... the Suffering we experience when we are following Christ ... that is the aim of what Romans 8:14-25 is focusing on ... we are suffering because we are Obeying Christ, Following Christ, and Proclaiming Christ with our lips and our lives.

We will suffer with Christ, just like Christ suffered ... He suffered because He was Proclaiming God's Truth and never backed down in the face of death threats ... as an example to us who FOLLOW HIM. Do we follow Him, or do we try to just get along and not rock the boat? (again, not being arrogant, loud-mouthed, prideful, wanting just to win the argument, etc...) We are called to Loving and Truthful ... we must be motivated by Love, prayerfully loving the sinner ... but we must not be silent about God's Word and who Jesus is, that we are sinners in need of a Savior, etc. We must get that into conversations ... we must, for their sakes ... coming judgment of God's Wrath is almost upon us.

1 Peter 3:13-18

¹³And who will harm you if you are deeply committed to what is good? ¹⁴But even if you should suffer for righteousness, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear or be disturbed, ¹⁵but honor the Messiah as Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. ¹⁶However, do this with gentleness and respect, keeping your conscience clear, so that when you are accused, those who denounce your Christian life will be put to shame. ¹⁷For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil. ¹⁸For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring you to God, after being put to death in the fleshly realm but made alive in the spiritual realm.

1 Peter 4:1-5

Therefore, since Christ suffered in the flesh, equip yourselves also with the same resolve—because the one who suffered in the flesh has finished with sin — ²in order to live the remaining time in the flesh, no longer for human desires, but for God's will. ³For there has already been enough time spent in doing what the pagans choose to do: carrying on in unrestrained behavior, evil desires, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, and lawless idolatry. ⁴So they are surprised that you don't plunge with them into the same flood of wild living — and they **slander you. ⁵They will give an account to the One who stands ready to judge the living and the dead.**

1 Peter 4:12-14

¹²Dear friends, don't be surprised when the fiery ordeal comes among you to test you as if something unusual were happening to you. ¹³Instead, rejoice as you share in the sufferings of the Messiah, so that you may also rejoice with great joy at the revelation of His glory. ¹⁴If you are **RIDICULED** for the **NAME** of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

So, understand ... God has already written these things to Prepare us for what we are going to be facing in these very few short days ... days of persecution, like never seen here in the USA ...

Matthew 24:9-14

⁹“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be **HATED** by all nations for **My Name's sake**. ¹⁰And then many will be **OFFENDED**, will betray one another, and will **HATE** one another. ¹¹Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. ¹²And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³But he who endures to the end shall be saved. ¹⁴And this **gospel** of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and **then the end will come**.

Jesus also said in Mark 8:35-38:

³⁵ **For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My Sake and the Gospel's Sake will save it.** ³⁶ **For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?** ³⁷ **Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?** ³⁸ **For whoever is ASHAMED of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ASHAMED when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”**

According to Romans 8:14-25 ... the kinds of sufferings we may be facing very soon ... will **pale in comparison** to the Glory that is going to be revealed in Christ at His 2nd Coming ...
For those who **EAGERLY** are **WAITING** for HIM ... those who are **EAGERLY LOOKING** Forward to Him... He is returning for those folks.

Mark my words, folks, Persecution is going to rise to a level, never seen before in the USA. The enemies of God and of His Gospel, etc... they have been Emboldened by the recent SCOTUS decisions of 5 Justices. These enemies of God are exponentially emboldened like on Steroids ... and the Demonic is rising ...

These days were Prophesied in many passages, including:

2 Timothy 3:1-9, Romans 1:18-32; and 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 - shows that the days leading up the Rapture of the Church and the Subsequent starting of the 7 year Great Tribulation will **NOT** be one of great sweeping Revivals all of over the earth, **BUT** a **Massive Falling Away** just before the unveiling of the anti-Christ. The Falling Away is also called the Great Apostasy ... which is starting to rise exponentially like never before in all of USA history. Instead of Massive Revival the Word of God reveals a massive Great Apostasy, and great Falling Away from the Faith.

What lead up to this is the Rejection of the LOVE of the TRUTH ... they don't want to RECEIVE the LOVE of the TRUTH and be Saved by Christ ... therefore God will pour out a massive Strong Delusion so that those masses will be deceived and Believe the LIE ... which is what we are seeing today... it is like people are under a Spell and cannot see things as they really are. This was prophesied to Precede the Rising and Unveiling of the anti-christ (see **2 Thessalonians 2:1-12**)

There will be massive increase in people who will Hate God, Kill their Parents, and Despise those who are Good and do Good (godly Christians, etc.) **2 Timothy 3:1-9** ...

Romans 1:18-32 displays 4 distinct stages of Corruption of any society, people group, nation, region as folks Reject God initially and then worship the creation instead of the creator (e.g. evolution, etc.). It will lead to full Approval of doing what is Evil in God's eyes, forceful approval ...**forcing the approval on others** ... or there will be consequences for speaking against Evil and against its approval.

What should our Response be, based upon these Scriptures to what has happened in these recent days?

1. **Make sure you are Genuinely Saved.** (2 Corinthians 13:5)
If not, you will be swept away to believe the strong delusions which are contrary to God and will lead to further apostasy, etc.

Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.

2. **Know God's Word before speaking** ... study it, memorize it, live according to it, share it with others around you. In the New Covenant, live according to what applies to us in the Bible to us in Christ

3. **Pray ... pray for these lost sinners ...** just like any other types of lost sinners. Pray that God will save them, open their eyes, ears and hearts to Repent and Receive Christ.

1 Cor. 6:9-11 - ⁹Don't you know that the unrighteous will not inherit God's kingdom? DO NOT BE DECEIVED: No sexually immoral people, idolaters, adulterers, or anyone practicing homosexuality, ¹⁰no thieves, greedy people, drunkards, verbally abusive people, or swindlers will inherit God's kingdom. ¹¹AND SOME OF YOU USED TO BE LIKE THIS. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

We must pray for this... we must pray for them, because Christ died for them and loves them. But, they must come to grips to with SIN in their lives, humble themselves, REPENT of their SIN and come to Christ as a humble sinner in desperate need of a Savior.

4. **Prayerfully speak and share God's Word with the lost.** We cannot shy away from them. But, we must seek God on how we can approach them with God's LOVE AND TRUTH ... yes, we must be motivated by God's Love to Share His Truth ... We must share the Gospel with them, regardless. We must be loving, gentle AND BOLD and not fearful.

We can use many ways, including direct – face-to-face, internet, social media, etc. Be creative, but be Missional. We are not there to become friends with them (to become best friends and buddies, etc...). We are here to win souls. People are not projects either ... we must love people to be able to share the Gospel with people. But, God loves them more than we do.

It is spiritual warfare (Ephesians 6:10-20). Satan wants to keep these folks behind the Gates of Hell, behind the Prison walls of the Hell of their Life, their bondage to Sin, they may many strongholds, as well.

So, remember to be prayed up, have others pray for you, and go with the Gospel, to all the lost.

Here is a good video that also may help: <https://vimeo.com/131915672>