

Romans 8:35-39

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

36 As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all the day long;

we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers,

39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Persecution of the Christian Church has been going on since the time of the

apostles after Christ's resurrection. It is said that there were more Christians killed for their faith in the 20th century than in the previous nineteen centuries combined. And it looks as though the 21st century will be worse.

Christians are the most persecuted religious group worldwide. An average of at least 180 Christians around the world are killed each month for their faith. (Source: Open Doors USA)

Christians in more than 60 countries face persecution from their governments or surrounding neighbors simply because of their belief in Christ. (Source: U.S. Department of State)

One of the worst countries in the world for the persecution of Christians is North Korea. With the exception of four official state-controlled churches in Pyongyang, Christians in North Korea face the risk of

detention in the prison camps, severe torture and, in some cases, execution for practicing their religious beliefs. North Koreans suspected of having contact with South Korean or other foreign missionaries in China, and those caught in possession of a Bible, have been known to be executed. (Source: Christian Solidarity Worldwide)

In 41 of the 50 worst nations for persecution, Christians are being persecuted by Islamic extremists. (Source: Open Doors)

This is a reality that Christ warned his disciples about. In John 15:18 Jesus said, "if the world hates you, know that it hated me first". This is a truth that many young believers simply don't know, or really understand. For our youth the only certainty in their lives is that they will face some form of persecution. The landscape of modern Christianity is changing. Even in the west. Given the realities of the world we live in, I

recently spent three weeks talking about persecution with our youth. This was not a topic that I wanted to gloss over. I wanted them to know the possibilities that they very well may face simply for their faith in Jesus. Also, to combat the popular prosperity teaching taught by some churches. Our youth need prayer. They will be a generation unlike any other. False teaching is rampant. The church is being persecuted at unprecedented levels worldwide. Hopefully they will embrace the full truth of the gospel. That though they may face opposition on all sides, there is nothing that can separate them from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

In His Service,

Mike