

# Perpetual Politically Correct Prejudice

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake from Internet sources)

Introduction:

A. Mark 13:9-13

1. A Chinese preacher is arrested and thrown into prison. His sons are beaten by the police.
2. 70,000 Indian Christians were driven from their home and forced to march through a jungle to safety to avoid people intent on their extermination.
3. Mexican family of Christians is attacked and killed by their neighbor because he blamed them and their faith for his daughter's illness.
4. In Saudi Arabia a man cut out his own daughter's tongue and burned her to death because she converted to Christianity.
5. Taliban gunmen in Afghanistan shot and killed a Christian aid worker as she walked down the street just because she was "spreading religion."
6. All of these events occurred in one week. We don't hear much about it in the media, but over 200 million Christian adherents in 60 countries are suffering intense persecution for their faith.
7. Thousands of adherents to a Christian faith in West Africa are being killed or enslaved while the American press remains silent. There is no difference between this and the silence of the press during Hitler's holocaust; our news media has been complicit more than once
8. We have a President whose public support of Islam has sent an implied message of endorsement to the rest of the world
9. We live with a news and entertainment industry that calls devout Christians, "Christian extremists" and "right wing fanatics"

B. In the middle of a culture that shouts for tolerance and equal treatment, we still have three forms of prejudice that are not just publicly endorsed, but are strongly encouraged:

1. Ageism is stereotyping and discriminating against individuals or groups on the basis of their age.
2. Weight stigma, also known as weightism and weight bias, is discrimination or stereotyping based on one's weight, especially very fat or extremely thin people.
3. Anti-Christian sentiment is an opposition or objection to Christians, the Christian religion, or its practice; sometimes referred to as Christianophobia (Wikipedia)
4. Reporter and author Michael Coren of the Huffington Post, calls "Anti-Christianity: the Last Acceptable Prejudice"

C. Is anyone surprised? - Matt. 16:24-27

## I. A PROMISE OF HARDSHIP

A. The powers behind this hardship are the very ones ordained by God for the protection of the innocent; this reminds us that our help comes from God, not fair civil government or an honest news media

1. Acts 4 - Peter and John face the Sanhedrin to give an account of the healing of the lame man at the Temple and the Gospel they preached.
2. Acts 7 - Stephen is tried by the Sanhedrin and condemned to die.
3. Acts 9:22-25 - The Jews want to kill Paul for preaching Christ.
4. Acts 12 - James and Peter are arrested by King Herod. They are imprisoned and scheduled to be executed. James is beheaded, but Peter is delivered by miracle.
5. Acts 14:19 - Paul is stoned and left for dead at Lystra.
6. Acts 16:19-24 - Paul and Silas are imprisoned in Philippi.
7. Acts 18:12-17 - Paul is persecuted in Macedonia.
8. Acts 19 - Paul is arrested and tried in Ephesus.
9. Acts 21 - Paul is arrested and held for trial in Jerusalem.
10. Acts 24 - Paul is tried before Felix.
11. Acts 26 - Paul is tried before Festus and King Agrippa.
12. Acts 27-28 - Paul is kept under arrest and sent by ship to stand trial before Caesar. Paul remains a prisoner in Rome and is eventually executed by the Romans.
13. Paul's testimony of the things he suffered for Jesus - 2Cor. 11:21-29

B. Why did the disciples receive this treatment from the religious Jews and from secular government?

1. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a direct threat to organized religion and corrupt human government
2. The Gospel with its call to repentance and exclusive faith in Jesus Christ challenges everybody who hears it.
3. The Gospel exposes the sin and ungodliness of the world and what it accepts as moral conduct. When the system is confronted by the Gospel, the system reacts by seeking to silence the Gospel.
4. It has been this way since the beginning of the church and it will continue this way until Jesus comes to gather the righteous.

C. Purpose of the hardship is two-fold:

1. To seal the destiny of those who reject the Gospel and its message. They prove their sinfulness by rejecting the Word of God and salvation.
  - a. God receives as much vindication and glory from the damnation of sinners and He does from the salvation of His saints.
  - b. When God saves a soul, He demonstrates His grace, love and mercy. When God condemns a soul to Hell, He demonstrates His righteousness, holiness, and power.
  - c. Rom. 9:18-24
2. Persecution causes the Gospel to spread. When believers seal their testimony with their blood, a lost world takes notice.
  - a. Approximately 60 percent of the world's Christians live in prosperity and peace. We have most of the money, most of the Bibles, the various outreach opportunities such as radio, television, printed media and the Internet. 40 percent of the world's Christians live in poverty and persecution. Many of these people suffer daily for their faith, and others are tortured and killed for believing in Jesus Christ. The greatest number of conversions are reported among poverty stricken, persecuted

believers. They are suffering and dying for their faith, and millions are being influenced. We, on the other hand, enjoy our peace and prosperity, but have little impact for Jesus. There is a connection between hardship and the spread of the Gospel

D. Why does the world feel so threatened?

1. We teach the world that there is only one way to be saved (John 14:6). They want the option to embrace any path as a way to God or merely personal fulfillment.
2. We tell the world that God requires righteousness and holiness, that we live above base and selfish desire. They want to live on their terms, doing as they please when they please (1Peter 4:1-4).
3. We tell the world that abortion, euthanasia, assisted suicide, and self-destructive behaviors like drinking, gambling, substance abuse, homosexuality, and unrestrained sexual conduct are all wrong. They want to treat life as if it has no value.
4. We tell the world that there is a place called Heaven that can only be reached through the Gospel. They want to believe that everyone goes to Heaven, or that life ends with nothing more than a grave.
5. We tell the world, false religions, and human government that God's Word is the final authority and that they will face Him in judgment one day. They want to live as though there is no God and as if they will never give an account for their actions.

E. Our message and the way of the world are diametrically opposed.

1. 2Tim. 3:10-13
2. We are living in an era where social liberals are in control of government. We are living in a time when everyone is expected to accept homosexuality as an alternative lifestyle. We are expected to accept that a woman has the right to murder her unborn child. We are expected to tolerate sin and vice of every kind.
3. We are expected to tone down our message and soften our speech so that we do not offend the people who engage in sinful activity. When we fail to go along with the demands of this increasingly secular society, we can expect to be vilified and restricted for our stand.

## **II. A PROMISE OF HELP**

A. When the disciples find themselves under this kind of persecution, they can expect help from God - Acts 4:5-10, 15-21; Heb. 13:5; Matt. 28:20

1. On April 17, 1521, the reformation leader Martin Luther was summoned before a Roman Catholic council to answer charges of heresy. As Luther stood there, he said, "Unless I am convinced by proofs from Scriptures or by plain and clear reasons and arguments, I can and will not retract, for it is neither safe nor wise to do anything against conscience. Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me. Amen." Those words, among others spoken that day, led the council to condemn Luther as a heretic. He was persecuted, but the protestant reformation was launched by those very words.

B. God did not promise to remove the hardship or stop the persecutors; He promised to help us remain faithful and keep our homes in heaven

1. James – Beheaded by Herod

2. Peter – Crucified upside down
  3. Andrew – Crucified on an olive tree
  4. Thomas - Thrust through with pine spears, tormented with red-hot plates, and burned alive.
  5. Philip – Tortured and crucified
  6. Matthew – Beheaded
  7. Nathanael – Skinned alive and then crucified
  8. James the Less – Thrown down from the temple mount and then beaten to death with a fuller's club.
  9. Simon the Zealot - Crucified
  10. Thaddeus – Beaten to death with rods
  11. Matthias – Stoned while hanging on a cross
  12. John the Beloved – Exiled to the prison island of Patmos.
  13. Paul – Beheaded in Rome
  14. God did not spare them from death in this world; He protected them from eternal death in the world to come.
  15. The apostles were okay with that - Phil. 1:20; Matt. 10:22; 1John 2:19
- C. Could it happen here? Yes, but more likely, believers here will face fines, public censure, and the loss of personal rights and property for the Gospel.
1. Parents will watch children and grandchildren yield to the pressure and abandon the faith
  2. Married persons will face increasing pressure from non-believing mates to abandon their unpopular faith
  3. Employees will be tempted to hide their faith to keep their jobs; employers will have to compromise their morals to keep their business
  4. Parents will have to face the courts when their children report their faith practiced at home to teachers in school; parents' access to children could be restricted or supervised
  5. Insurance companies and the tax code will create incentives to have abortions and encourage other immoral practices
  6. And then, after government and society have become accustomed to limiting your religious freedom, they will take it away with some so called public interest legislation
  7. We need to ask if we are prepared to face such a time of persecution.
- D. Is it the end of the world?
1. No, it is the end of a world to which we have grown accustomed.
  2. Persecution, while painful and personally devastating, would do more for the church than all of our current works, buildings, and writings.
  3. Persecution would purify the church - 1Peter 1:7
    - a. Sinners and half-hearted Christians would be driven from the rosters as they yield to the pressure against Christians.
    - b. Liberalism would disappear when local churches are forced to return to their fundamental roots and works

Conclusion:

A. What are we to do with a message like this?

1. Obey the Gospel today. Get started on your commitment to the Lord right now, rather than waiting until the pressure and persecution increase in the future
2. Christians should examine their hearts, asking if they are committed to Jesus even to death.
  - a. Do you shy away from a simple confrontation at school or work?
  - b. Some here aren't even committed to Jesus enough to face the snow or being tired after work or with a headache
  - c. How are you going to handle it when the real pressure starts?
3. Pray for those in other places who are openly opposed for their faith.
  - a. And then pray for us that we will have the same resolve should we be called on to walk a similar path of persecution.