



Perpetual Politically Correct Prejudice

Mark 13:9-13

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- “But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them. 10 And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations. 11 But when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. 12 Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. 13 And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.”

Perpetual Politically Correct Prejudice

- Over 200 million Christian adherents in 60 countries are suffering intense persecution for their faith.
- Thousands of adherents to a Christian faith in West Africa are being killed or enslaved while the American press remains silent.
- We have a President whose public support of Islam has sent an implied message of endorsement to the rest of the world
- We live with a news and entertainment industry that calls devout Christians, “Christian extremists” and “right wing fanatics”

Perpetual Politically Correct Prejudice

- 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:
 - Ageism is stereotyping and discriminating against individuals or groups on the basis of their age.
 - 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.
 - Anti-Christian sentiment is an opposition or objection to Christians, the Christian religion, or its practice; sometimes referred to as Christianophobia (Wikipedia)

Perpetual Politically Correct Prejudice

- Reporter and author Michael Coren of the Huffington Post, calls Anti-Christianity, “The Last Acceptable Prejudice”
- Is anyone surprised?
 - Matt. 16:24-27 - “Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.”

A Promise Of Hardship

- 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

A Promise Of Hardship

- 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.
- Acts 7 - Stephen is tried by the Sanhedrin and condemned to die.
- Acts 9:22-25 - The Jews want to kill Paul for preaching Christ.
- 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.
- Acts 14:19 - Paul is stoned and left for dead at Lystra.
- Acts 16:19-24 - Paul and Silas are imprisoned in Philippi.

A Promise Of Hardship

- Acts 18:12-17 - Paul is persecuted in Macedonia.
- Acts 19 - Paul is arrested and tried in Ephesus.
- Acts 21 - Paul is arrested and held for trial in Jerusalem.
- Acts 24 - Paul is tried before Felix.
- Acts 26 - Paul is tried before Festus and King Agrippa.
- 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.
- Paul's testimony of the things he suffered for Jesus - 2Cor. 11:21-29

A Promise Of Hardship

- Why did the disciples receive this treatment from the religious Jews and from secular government?
 - The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a direct threat to organized religion and corrupt human government
 - The Gospel with its call to repentance and exclusive faith in Jesus Christ challenges everybody who hears it.
 - 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.
 - It has been this way since the beginning of the church and it will continue this way until Jesus comes to gather the righteous.

A Promise Of Hardship

- Purpose of the hardship is two-fold:
 - 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.
 - 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.

A Promise Of Hardship

- Rom. 9:18-24 - “Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens. 19 You will say to me then, Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will? 20 But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, Why have you made me like this? 21 Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor? 22 What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, 23 and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, 24 even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?”

A Promise Of Hardship

- Persecution causes the Gospel to spread. When believers seal their testimony with their blood, a lost world takes notice.
- There is a connection between hardship and the spread of the Gospel

Why Does The World Feel So Threatened?

- 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.
- 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).

Why Does The World Feel So Threatened?

- 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.
- 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.
- We tell the world, false religions, and human government that 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.

Why Does The World Feel So Threatened?

- Our message and the way of the world are diametrically opposed.
 - 2Tim. 3:10-13 - “But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, 11 persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra-- what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. 12 Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. 13 But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.”

A Promise Of Help

- 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 - “...For He Himself has said, I will never leave you nor forsake you.”
 - Matt. 28:20 - “...and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”
- 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

A Promise Of Help

- James – Beheaded by Herod
- Peter – Crucified upside down
- Andrew – Crucified on an olive tree
- Thomas - Thrust through with pine spears, tormented with red-hot plates, and burned alive.
- Philip – Tortured and crucified
- Matthew – Beheaded
- Nathanael – Skinned alive and then crucified

A Promise Of Help

- James the Less – Thrown down from the temple mount and then beaten to death with a fuller's club.
- Simon the Zealot - Crucified
- Thaddeus – Beaten to death with rods
- Matthias – Stoned while hanging on a cross
- John the Beloved – Exiled to the prison island of Patmos.
- Paul – Beheaded in Rome

A Promise Of Help

- God did not spare them from death in this world; He protected them from eternal death in the world to come.
- The apostles were okay with that
 - Phil. 1:20 - “...Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.”
 - Matt. 10:22 - “...But he who endures to the end will be saved.”
 - 1John 2:19 - “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.”

A Promise Of Help

- 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.
 - Parents will watch children and grandchildren yield to the pressure and abandon the faith
 - Married persons will face increasing pressure from non-believing mates to abandon their unpopular faith

A Promise Of Help

- Employees will be tempted to hide their faith to keep their jobs; employers will have to compromise their morals to keep their business
- 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
- Insurance companies and the tax code will create incentives to have abortions and encourage other immoral practices

A Promise Of Help

- 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
- We need to ask if we are prepared to face such a time of persecution.

A Promise Of Help

- Is it the end of the world?
- No, it is the end of a world to which we have grown accustomed.
- Persecution, while painful and personally devastating, would do more for the church than all of our current works, buildings, and writings

A Promise Of Help

- Persecution would purify the church
 - 1Peter 1:7 - “That the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ”
 - Sinners and half-hearted Christians would be driven from the rosters as they yield to the pressure against Christians.
 - Liberalism would disappear when local churches are forced to return to their fundamental roots and works

A Promise Of Help

- What are we to do with a message like this?
 - 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

A Promise Of Help

- Christians should examine their hearts, asking if they are committed to Jesus even to death.
 - Do you shy away from a simple confrontation at school or work?
 - Some here aren't even committed to Jesus enough to face the snow or being tired after work or with a headache
 - How are you going to handle it when the real pressure starts?

A Promise Of Help

- Pray for those in other places who are openly opposed for their faith.
 - And then pray for us that we will have the same resolve should we be called on to walk a similar path of persecution.