

The New Testament Church
Preparing for Persecution #3: Truth Under Assault
 Pastor Paul Jehle – August 7, 2022
 2nd Corinthians 10:3-5, Romans 12:1-2; 1st Peter 3:15

I What is Persecution?

- A. Persecution is defined from the Greek; *to put to flight, drive away.... to pursue* – it is **pressure**
 - 1. Persecution is distinct from trials because it is a relentless *pursuit against your faith*
 - 2. We must remember that persecution is ultimately against Christ, not us, and it begins within
- B. Persecution is on the rise – 1 in 7 believers world-wide, suffered significant persecution in 2021
- C. God's purpose for allowing persecution is to expose the darkness and intensify our godly living
 - 1. We are blessed if persecuted for righteousness' sake; can also on unnecessary persecution
 - 2. *God uses pressure from the flesh and enemy to focus on the manifestation of His Kingdom!*
 - 3. Preparing for persecution begins with practicing to fight the pressure against spiritual growth

II The **assault on Truth** (why a Biblical worldview is absolutely essential)

- A. The assault on truth is primarily an attack on our minds in two ways...
 - 1. To distract us with detours away from focusing; our mind races in all directions at once
 - 2. An attack on Biblical absolutes (precepts & principles) - true at all times, places and cultures
- B. The Old Testament – mind - the first shoot that grows out of the ground (self-government)
 - 1. Meditation - Hebrew *siyach* - to converse with oneself... to chew the cud until digested
 - 2. *Lamad* - teaching/learning – “to cut a channel” – borders (limits) - premises and principles
 - 3. **We develop a disciplined mind by setting limits to help us focus and pay attention**
- C. The New Testament word for mind
 - 1. Nous – Vine says the “*seat of reflective consciousness... faculties of perception*”
 - 2. Dianoia – “deep thought.” (dia – channel, canal; noia – “a thinking through, meditation”)
- D. 2nd Corinthians 10:3-5 – how we counter the **assaults against our faith**
 - 1. v. 3-4 We don't war against assaults physically or with carnal, prideful logic
 - 2. v. 4-5 It includes both the spirit and the mind – the “spirit of the mind” (Ephesians 4:23)
 - a. Pulling down strongholds (fortresses) – Proverbs 18:19 – contentions – like a castle
 - b. Casting down arguments (faulty premises) – **(a) what are my Biblical assumptions?**
 - c. Every high thing – every thought and area of life into the obedience of Christ (Word)
- E. Romans 12:1-2 – the doctrine of *sanctification* – how do we grow? **(b) we renew our minds!**
 - 1. We must first be born again – our spirit regenerated – the beginning of sanctification
 - 2. Transformed (metamorphosis) into His image by the renewing of the mind (2nd Cor. 3:17-18)
 - a. *Reflection* (meditation) – actively pondering – focusing - (a list or notebook)
 - b. *Creative expression* – the “spirit of the mind” – (rehearse who I am in Christ)
 - c. *Application* – apply the Word to every area of life – from recreation to cultural policy
- F. 1st Peter 3:15 – *give a reason for hope.... with meekness (respect) and fear (of God)*
 - a. The word “reason” (apologia) means **(c) “a well-reasoned reply”**; three examples follow:
 - b. Loaded question – asking a question while hiding an accusation
Transcendence – God, the Bible, absolutes vs. science or scientists, rulers, etc.
Everyone has assumptions as to who is perfect, either themselves or a certain group
 - c. Either-Or fallacy – two alternatives, but ignoring that there are others as well
Jurisdiction – God has not given any individual or institution total power – delegated
Who should solve the problem? Who has been given the authority to do so?
 - d. Equivocation – changing the meaning of words without disclosing it
Justice – rule of law; when did it change to “redistribution of wealth to appease?”
Each one has a choice, but we must all live with the consequences of that choice