

Persecution and Praise

Scripture Reading — Psalm 119:57-64

The jailer ... asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus ..."
Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him.
—Acts 16:29-32 —

A mob in the city of Philippi falsely accused Paul and Silas of disturbing the peace by their preaching and healing. They were severely beaten, thrown in jail, and put in stocks. We might expect them to be very discouraged, complain of their pain, and be ready to give up on their work in God's mission.

But Paul and Silas's reactions are amazing. Instead of groaning in the middle of the night, they prayed and sang, and the other prisoners listened to them. It was like the testimony of the writer of Psalm 119: "Though the wicked bind me with ropes, I will not forget your law. At midnight I rise to give you thanks for your righteous laws."

From the beginning of Paul's new life in Christ, he knew he would face persecution and suffering in his ministry to bring the good news of Jesus across the Roman Empire. In fact, Jesus tells all of his followers to expect opposition and hatred. Persecution should not shake our rock-solid belief that God's Word is true, revealing that Jesus Christ is Savior and Lord.

In fact, our acceptance of suffering for his name may even be an opportunity for us to speak about God's love for the whole world.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, our fellow believers in many places are suffering much. They are losing their freedoms, homes, livelihoods, and loved ones. Give them strength, we pray. Keep them singing your praises. Amen.

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