

A Call To Persevere (Part 3)

“³² Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you endured in a great conflict full of suffering. ³³ Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. ³⁴ You suffered along with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions. ³⁵ So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. ³⁶ You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. ³⁷ For, “In just a little while, he who is coming will come and will not delay.” ³⁸ And, “But my righteous one will live by faith. And I take no pleasure in the one who shrinks back.” ³⁹ But we do not belong to those who shrink back and are destroyed, but to those who have faith and are saved.” (Hebrews 10: 32-39)

God message is always will come to us on time to fill the need and help us to endure life’s trials and uncomfortable circumstances, “*For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*” (Hebrews 4:12) The Word of God it shows another aspect for the believer that he needs to stand firm and persevere. This is the aspect of accepting rejection and persecution as part of our life and calling by God.

The Lord Jesus Christ spoke about that when He spoke the parable of the sower: “*The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.*” (Matthew 13:20-21) As we hear the message, the word of God is falling into our hearts to change us and to transform us. But while the Word of God is taking the time required to do that, there is another factor working to contradict and oppose the word of God from working and have its effect on our lives and this factor is trouble and persecution because of the Word of God.

Once we repent and decide to follow Jesus and live according to His Word, devil will start to work at this time to oppose us. *Devil will oppose us whether by direct way or indirect way. Direct opposition* by announcing persecution because we live according to the word of God and preach to the people the good news; encouraging them to live their lives according to the message that we receive from God. The persecution will come in this way on the form of rejection, isolation, imprisonment, expulsion or execution.

The Word of God tells us the following: “*For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him.*” (Philippians 1:29) When we believe in Christ and start to follow Him and walk in His ways persecution will also come true into our lives as we can read here: “*In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.*” (2 Timothy 3:12) The Lord also admonishes us with the following: “*Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*” (Matthew 5:10-12) Opposition and persecution is part of our calling by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Jesus also said to His disciples and unto us the following: “*All this I have told you so that you will not fall away.*” ² *They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, the time is coming*

when anyone who kills you will think they are offering a service to God.” ³ *They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me.*” ⁴ *I have told you this, so that when their time comes you will remember that I warned you about them. I did not tell you this from the beginning because I was with you.*” (John 16:1-4) But you may ask why? “*If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first.*” ¹⁹ *If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.*” (John 15:18-19) The time that you start to follow the Word of God, that will entail on you not to compromise or go with the ways of the world. And as you leave the old life and be away from friends, neighbour and relatives who do not agree with what God says in His Word and live their lives unto Him, then here will begin the isolation, persecution, rejection and the suffering.

Devil may oppose us by indirect way, like causing us sicknesses, problems in the places that we are working, financial pressures, etc. All the above may cause us to be daunted and discouraged from continuing serving God and living in the truth. The Scripture that we chose from the book of Hebrews deals with believers who got discouraged from the insults, rejection and persecution they had repeatedly receive and suffer. Now they are aloof, shrink back and being discouraged and hopeless, therefore they don’t want to continue to work out their lives in the way that God wants them to be. And here come the encouragement from the Word of God.

1- Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you endured in a great conflict full of suffering: You don’t need to be discouraged! What you are facing now already had happened in the past and you had endured it. So endure it this time as well.

2- At other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated: Previously you had encouraged others who suffered the same as you now passing through. There will be people who will be encouraged as you stand firm now and continue to do what God had entrusted to you to do.

3- So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded: *You suffered along with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions:* As you accepted persecution before you accept it again because great is your reward here on earth and in heaven.

4- You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised: God had called us to stand firm and persevere in doing the will of God. As we are pursuing the will of God we are working with God. Devil here will oppose us to hinder us, so we need to be alert and not give up but to continue persevering in achieving what He had called us to do.

My Dear and Beloved: *For, “In just a little while, he who is coming will come and will not delay.”* Jesus is coming soon and we need to live by faith. Jesus will not be happy with us if he would found us discouraged or shrink back; that should not be our case. We should conform to the word of God, “*But we do not belong to those who shrink back and are destroyed, but to those who have faith and are saved.*” Our faith should be persevering faith in doing God’s will and to the end facing all the pressure of rejection and persecution as we agree to pray.

My Prayer: *Father God I thank you for your Son the Lord Jesus Christ who died on the cross for my sins to give me eternal life. Lord I commit my life again into your hand to persevere in facing trials, rejection and persecution, not to be discouraged, daunted or shrink back, but trusting you and have confidence that you will reward me as I continue to serve you. Lord uphold me with your love and grace and provide for me and encourage me so I can continue to serve you, this is my prayer in Jesus name Amen.*