

³⁹ *These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised.* ⁴⁰ *God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.*

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Sermon Notes

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How to Become a Christian

Many people believe they are Christians because they were born in a Christian culture, go to church regularly, try to do their best, or live a good life. However, the Bible teaches that these things cannot make you a Christian. You become a Christian by simply taking these two steps:

- Acknowledge that you (along with all people) have sinned and fallen short of God's standards. ROMANS 3:23
- Personally believe that Jesus Christ, who was God in human flesh, died for your sins on the cross and rose again. 1 CORINTHIANS 15:3, 4

You may express your belief through prayer, asking Jesus to come into your life, and receiving Him as God's gift to you.

JOHN 1:12, ROMANS 6:23, REVELATION 3:20

EPHESIANS 2:8, 9 *For it is by grace you have been saved through faith...it is the gift of God; not by works, so that no one can boast.*

Endure Persecution

ACTS 8:1-5

The Gospel grows and expands the Church as it endures persecution.

Persecution: _____

LUKE 21:12-15 *But before all this, they will lay hands on you and persecute you. They will deliver you to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. ¹³ This will result in your being witnesses to them. ¹⁴ But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. ¹⁵ For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict.*

Acts 1:8 *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*

ORIGIN Old English *martir*, via ecclesiastical Latin from Greek *martur* 'witness' (in Christian use, 'martyr')
American Heritage Dictionary

Persecution: _____

Persecution leads to _____ Gospel.

ACTS 8:1-5 *On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. ² Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. ³ But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison.*

⁴ *Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. ⁵ Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there.*

- Those who persecute can be used by God. v. 3
- Those persecuted _____ Christ. v. 4
- Those persecuted _____ on the Holy Spirit. v. 5

ACTS 21:8 *Leaving the next day, we reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven.*

Persecution brings about _____ in those that believe.

- Persecution produces maturity in how we view our life and _____.

HEBREWS 10:32-34 *Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face 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 sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.*

- Persecution produces _____.

ROMANS 5:2B-5 *And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. ³ Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵ And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.*

Enduring Persecution

Remember Jesus warned it would come.

Endurance is possible as we _____, our souls, to God.

1 PETER 4:12-19 *Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴ If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. ¹⁵ If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. ¹⁶ However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. ¹⁷ For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸ And,*

“If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?”

¹⁹ So then, those who suffer according to God’s will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

Endurance is possible because we cannot be _____ from God’s love.

ROMANS 8:37-39 *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Endurance is possible because even _____ those who believe have a resurrection to eternal life.

HEBREWS 11:35-40 *Women received back their dead, raised to life again. Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection. ³⁶ Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. ³⁷ They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated— ³⁸ the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.*