

HOW SHOULD THE CHURCH RESPOND UNDER PERSECUTION?

Today more and more freedom of speech is being outlawed from us. In some countries it is illegal to say that Jesus is the only way to salvation, that you have to be born again and that homosexuality is a sin.

What if things got worse and street evangelism is outlawed and we are not allowed to say that anyone is a sinner. In some countries the church is restricted and directed by the state and that any deviation from their rules would almost certainly mean imprisonment at least. There are places in the UK where it is already illegal to pray in public.

How then are we going to see people learn the truth and the uniqueness of the true gospel of Jesus Christ and receive healing and deliverance under these circumstances? The answer is much more simple than many might think.

Jesus told us that when we pray we should go into our prayer closet and shut the door, then our Father who knows everything that is done in secret will reward us. Some people think He meant this literally, others that He meant it both literally and metaphorically. I believe He meant it both ways.

In Ephesians chapter 5 v 19 it reads "Pray constantly, singing psalms and hymns to God in your hearts with thanksgiving". Look also at Genesis chapter 24 verse 45 and the person it is talking about tells his listener "I had hardly finished my silent prayer" (some say "prayer in my heart" Others translations say "silent prayer") which is in effect the same thing. If you do this you can walk around literally anywhere and continue praying and nobody will know you are praying except yourself and God.

Some of the things you need to be praying in this way are Exodus chapter 17 verses 8 to 13. Moses, Aaron and Hur are on a hill overlooking a battle between Israel and the Philistines. When Moses arms are raised, the battle goes in favour of Israel, when they are lowered the battle goes in favour of the Philistines. According to logic then if everyone prays even five minutes a day for their leaders, then the church will see more and more victory where they are.

By the same token if everybody in our churches prayed even just five minutes per day in sincerity of heart for The sin of our ancestors, our own sin and the sin of the nation where we are living and for the presence of God to fall on the nation and see many souls saved then I believe that this would move the heart of God. Some say that we cannot put God in a box, no but we can take Him at His word. These things would herald in the revival that Christians so long for in their land.

We have a saying that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link, but we see in the New Testament that when we start to do these things God will very quickly respond positively. In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus found His disciples sleeping and said to them "could you not pray with me just one hour? I believe that 1 hour in prayer with God for these things would delight God who would then respond quickly.

Do not try to run before you can walk, start off praying these things for 5 minutes each per day and see how quickly you will lose track of time and find yourselves praying 1 hour much sooner than you may think. Do not pray against your government but pray for them that they will know the right thing to do and that they would have the courage to do them. Jesus tells us that if we pray like this we will reap red hot coals on their heads so to speak.

Are you willing to do these things for the sake of the lost? If we do not pray for them then quite literally, who on earth will?