

Home Group Questions

The week of 11/5/17

Romans 12:14

PERSECUTED FOR CHRIST

GETTING STARTED...

This past Sunday, Pastor Mel continued his sermon on the book of Romans. The verse he focused on was verse 14 of chapter 12 which addresses the reality of persecution.

LOOKING IN THE WORD...

1. Read Romans 12:14 along with Matthew 5:9-12.

When you read these verses, you immediately recoil a bit because you realize how difficult it is to love someone who wants to hurt or even destroy you. Talk about how you deal with the negative emotions of being wronged or persecuted for your faith and how you overcome those emotions. God's Word tells us to bless those who persecute us? What do those blessings look like? How can we bless people who hate us? What about the concept of rejoicing...how is that different from being happy (read Acts 5:40-42). Discuss the disciples amazing reaction to their persecution.

2. Read John 15:17-16:4. Discuss this passage. Pastor Mel defined "Persecution" as: "The attempt to stop and silence the message of Christ by inflicting mockery, strife, pain, or death on those who believe it." What are some ways you think Christians are persecuted today in America?

Here's a story from www.persecution.com that was taken posted on October 5, 2017. Read this story as an example of what is happening in many places around the world:

Pray for Three Families Forced to Flee ISIS Attacks. Earlier this year, an extremist group associated

with the Islamic State in the Sinai Province carried out a series of attacks on Christians in the northern Sinai, killing believers, destroying churches and bombing buses. Nearly all Christians fled the area, including three families that are now struggling to find work and affordable housing in Cairo. "[ISIS] took control over Sinai, so we don't think we will be able to go back," a Christian woman told a VOM worker. Please pray that these families and others affected by the attacks will find ways to support themselves and take comfort in God's promises.

Discuss this story in light of the contrast to our lives as Christians in America, and the responsibility we bear to help these brothers and sisters! (Visit the site for other stories like this and read them so as to become more aware!)

3. Read 1 Peter 4:12-19. This passage teaches that persecution should not surprise us! Verse 12 talks about persecution being a "test". Discuss some of the struggles people might have with trying to understand how God uses persecution of His people as a test of their faith.

4. One of the reasons the world hates us is because they feel convicted, and it often comes out in statements like, "Christians think they're better than us", "Christians are judging us"! How do you feel when you hear statements like that? What are ways in which those statements can either encourage you to witness or discourage you from witnessing?

5. Read Matthew 5:43-48. Discuss these radical words of Christ. How do you balance His words with continuing to stand up for the truth and promoting Christian values and beliefs aggressively in our country and community? Discuss other difficulties you may feel you have in living out these words, and strategies to obey Christ. Share specific examples of how you may have felt persecuted for your faith in the past.

MOVING FORWARD...

Pray for the persecuted church around the world and for boldness here in the USA!