DON’T BE SURPRISED

Text:  II Timothy 3:12 - “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”

John 15:20 - “…If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.”

John 16:33 - “…In this world ye shall have tribulation (trials, hardships, persecution), but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

Don’t be surprised, persecution will come to us all. Think about it, if you have truly been born again, you are changing constantly. The old person has died. New life has begun because of Jesus death and resurrection.

II Cor. 5:17 - “Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things have passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

So, if you truly have new life, the Holy Spirit is living inside of you, transforming you into the person God has designed for you to be.

When others, who are not saved, or are still immature believers, see the drastic changes occurring in your personality and character, they will take note. Some, though, may become jealous or resentful.

Remember this, it’s much easier for others to pick on someone else and tear their character down, than it is for that gossiper or backbiter to change themselves. It takes the focus off of them, when they criticize others.

If you really want to change - you can!

THE TWO “D” s :

1) DESIRE

2) DISCIPLINE
Some folks truly think they are doing God a service to persecute and/or punish you.

EXAMPLES:

1) The Muslims

See: John 16:2(b) - “...whosoever kills you will think that he does God service.”

2) Saul at Tarsus (before his conversion)

See: Acts 7:58 / Acts 8:1-4

POSITIVE RESULTS OF PERSECUTION:

1) It will bring you closer to God.

See: Acts 16:25 (Paul & Silas in jail)
   James 4:8 - “Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you.”

2) Make you a bolder witness.

See: Acts 8:4 - “...scattered abroad... went everywhere preaching the Word.”

See: Acts 5:40-42

These verses explain how the early church people were beaten, just for preaching the gospel. They left REJOICING! - (vs.#41) “…Ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.” - (vs.#42)

3) CAUSES YOU TO REALIZE WHO REALLY IS NO.#1 IN YOUR HEART.

See: Joshua 24:15 - “…choose you this day whom ye will serve... but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”
See: Acts 5:27-29
The Apostles before the Sanhedrin.
(vs.#29) “…we ought to obey God rather than men.” (Acts 5:29)


Matthew 22:27 - “…Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.”

See: Deuteronomy 4:29

4) SHOWS YOUR REAL CHARACTER (whether you will love & forgive).

Example:

a) Stephen. Acts 7:60 - “…lay not this sin to their charge…”

b) Jesus. Luke 23:34 - “…Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do…”

c) Paul. II Tim. 4:16 - “At my first answer, no man stood with me, but all men forsook me; I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.”

If you read the next two verses of II Timothy 4:17 & 18, you will discover more about Paul’s Christ-like character.
(vs. #17) …”the Lord stood with me…”(vs.#18) the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work…”

WHO REALLY IS OUR SOURCE AND STRENGTH IN TIMES OF PERSECUTION, TRIALS, AND TROUBLE?

IT IS THE LORD!

See: Psalms 46:1 - “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in times of trouble.”

See: Luke 6:23 - “Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy…”

See: Acts 5:41 - “…rejoicing that they were counted worthy to
suffer shame for His name.”

Most people in the Western civilization think they are being persecuted when someone talks ugly or unkind about them.

Ask missionaries or citizens who live in the third world countries what persecution means. They will quickly give stories of martyrs who suffered torment and torture for the cause of Christ.


Because we’ll be rewarded.

See: Revelation 6:9-11

(vs. #9) Talks about the fifth seal, martyrs seen.

“...them that were slain for the Word of God and for the testimony they held.”

EXAMPLE : John The Baptist - Mark 6:27

CONCLUSION :

Hebrews 11:36 & 37 (Sufferings & Martyrs of the faithful early Christians)

II Corinthians 11:23-33 (Some instances of Paul’s sufferings)

AS YOU STUDY AND REVIEW THESE SERMON NOTES, MAY YOU VIEW PERSECUTION IN A NEW LIGHT. NOT AS A TERRIBLE PUNISHMENT, BUT AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHINE AND WITNESS FOR JESUS. IT WILL BE THE BAROMETER REVEALING JUST HOW MUCH YOU LOVE GOD AND LOVE OTHERS.

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