

September Devotional: An "Unpopular" Promise for Christians

By Jerry Furniss

Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. (2 Timothy 3:12 NKJV)

This promise guarantees **persecution** for serious believers in Jesus Christ. In a church world where many treasure comfort and popularity, this promise is not well-received.

This promise is given to those who want to live a life of godliness. Godliness is the will of the Lord for His people. "*But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness*" (1 Timothy 6:11). Our Lord Himself declared that there is great blessing in having a passion for righteous living. "*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness*" (Matthew 5:6a). The blessing is God's pledge to satisfy that heart which yearns for righteousness. "*For they shall be filled*" (Matthew 5:6b).

However, we have seen that fullness of righteousness is not all that is promised to those who want to walk in godliness. Persecution is also promised. Notice the comprehensive, inescapable dimension of this promise. The devotion verse above says **ALL** will suffer persecution. There are no exceptions. All who sincerely desire to follow the Lord Jesus Christ will experience the consequences that He met, as He walked in righteousness. "*Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you*" (John 15:20). Jesus was not universally hailed for His righteous path. He was opposed, mocked, conspired against, and betrayed. We need not be startled when measures of similar persecutions befall us.

Of course, this promise of persecution is not given to discourage us from pressing on down the path of godliness. Rather, it is offered to prepare us for the difficulties that are guaranteed as we seek to grow in Christlikeness. The Lord even adds gracious encouragements to righteousness, so we will be strengthened to pursue His holy will in this matter. "*Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*" (Matthew 5:10). Persecutions can remind us that we are headed for heaven. Persecutions can bring us heavenly measures of sustaining grace along the way.

Therefore, let us continue to pursue his path. This means acknowledge Jehovah as our only God, accept Jesus as your savior and redeemer, allow the Holy Spirit to guide your will with His truth, and show your appreciation by obeying His commands.